

Response to question on notice

Questions on Notice Paper No 9

5 September 2025

Question No. 536

Ms Leanne Castley MLA: To ask the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services —

1. What data has the Government collected about average (a) wait times and (b) responses for the non-emergency police line (ACT Policing line 131 444), given wait times in excess of 10 minutes, and in some cases 30 minutes, have been reported that have caused individuals to give up on reporting incidents they have witnessed.
2. Has the Government identified any issues with the response times referred to in part (1); if so, are these attributable to staffing or funding shortages.
3. What measures are being taken to decrease wait times for the service referred to in part (1).

DR MARISA PATERSON MLA - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. a) ACT Policing's Communications Team strives to answer every call in a timely manner to ensure all callers are afforded the opportunity to speak with police.

Regrettably, there are times when ACT Policing Communications receives a high volume of calls and requests for service, and this will impact the waiting times.

During the 2024-25 financial year, the average wait time was 3.23 minutes. However, this is not a true reflection of the wait time due to lower call volumes at certain times of the day and, on different days of the week. For example, on a Monday:

- Between midnight and 8.00am, 40 calls could be received
- Between 8.00am and 10.00pm, 400 calls could be received
- Between 10.00pm and midnight, 20 calls could be received

Calls for police assistance must be prioritised and triaged. Emergency Triple Zero (000) calls are always taken first, with calls for 131 444 and then Crime Stoppers answered and triaged after that. ACT Policing Communications is constantly triaging calls, even while existing calls are on hold.

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b) During the 2024-25 financial year, there were 6,417 instances where the caller waited 10 minutes or more before terminating their call to the 131 444 line. The average time the caller waited before terminating the call was 21.13 minutes.

When interpreting abandoned call data on the 131 444 line, it is essential to consider whether callers attempted to contact ACT Policing multiple times to make their report, or if they only called once. Additionally, it should be taken into account whether an initially unsuccessful call led the person to submit a report through alternative methods, such as the online portal or other available channels.

It is also important to acknowledge that the available data does not explain the underlying reasons for calls being abandoned. While extended wait times may influence a caller's decision to terminate the call before speaking to a call taker, there are often multiple factors that can contribute to this outcome.

2. The causes for varying wait times are attributable to a range of reasons including but not limited to:
 - the complexity of the incident type;
 - the number of priority incidents occurring at the time of the call;
 - requirements to provide additional information to police by call takers (for example, alerts for locations or offenders).

Priority will always be given to incidents where a person is in immediate danger and during such times, call wait times may increase.

3. ACT Policing maintains a rigorous approach to monitoring call data and evaluating performance within their Communications teams. Throughout every work shift, the Sergeant responsible for each ACT Policing Communications Team carries out comprehensive quality assurance on the calls received. This process involves reviewing various aspects, including the:
 - duration of calls;
 - quality of responses provided by phone operators;
 - the efficiency of information gathering by call takers; and,
 - the overall standard of customer service delivered.

Constructive feedback is delivered to call takers in real time during their shifts. This supportive environment enables continuous professional development, giving call takers the opportunity to refine and enhance their skills as they work. The ongoing feedback system ensures that ACT Policing Communications operates at the highest possible standards at all times.

The Communications portfolio of ACT Policing produces regular weekly data reports. These reports detail the number of complex calls received, the length of calls, and include reviews of the response and process practices of individuals, teams, and the broader area. This systematic reporting supports ongoing assessment and improvement across ACT Policing Communications.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Dr Marisa Paterson MLA
Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services

Date: 21/10/25

This response required 4 hrs 50 mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$428.15.

