

Response to question on notice

Questions on Notice Paper No 15

06 February 2026

Question No. 861

Mr Shane Rattenbury MLA: To ask the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services -

1. What work is underway in ACT Policing to identify inherent bias and the risk of misidentification arising in future, given that the ACT Domestic and Family Violence Review presented to the Assembly on 3 February 2026 found that eight of 13 family violence victims were misidentified as perpetrators.
2. How can the Minister be confident that police have the capacity to identify, record and interpret patterns of abusive behaviour over time, ahead of any criminalisation of coercive control, given the report referred to in part (1).

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

1. ACT Policing notes the findings of the ACT Domestic and Family Violence Review, specifically the more recent release of the 2025 Biennial Review Report. ACT Policing is actively committed to addressing the risk of bias and misidentification in domestic and family violence responses. This is being realised through:
 - strengthening of investigative capability
 - enhanced risk assessment and decision-making support, and
 - rollout of targeted training on key themes such as misidentification.

These efforts are supported through a range of uplift initiatives across ACT Policing and significant investment in training with a focus on improving outcomes for victim-survivors and perceptions of safety of the ACT community.

ACT Policing is also continuing to strengthen its response to domestic and family violence through the establishment and ongoing development of the Domestic and Family Violence Investigation Unit. The unit expands and restructures the former Family Violence Unit and operates under a central coordination model to support more consistent and informed decision making in DFV matters.

The unit applies a holistic investigative model for high-risk and complex family violence incidents, recognising DFV as a pattern of behaviour rather than isolated events. This approach supports improved identification of primary perpetrators and reduces the risk of misidentification.

ACT Policing continues to work closely with the Family Violence Safety Action Program and partner agencies to support a whole-of-sector approach to victim-survivor safety. This includes strengthening use of the Family Violence Risk Assessment Tool to support effective frontline decision making. ACT Policing is also working with the ACT Domestic, Sexual and Family Violence Office within the Health and Community Services Directorate on the development of a future standardised, cross-sector risk assessment tool to strengthen system-wide responses.

ACT Policing is working with the Health and Community Services Directorate and the Justice and Community Safety Directorate on the development of the ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy. ACT Policing participated in consultation on the draft Strategy, including a targeted stakeholder workshop on 31 July 2025 focused on the ACT's 10-year vision and priority areas for change.

While still under development, the Strategy is intended to address systemic issues in the response to domestic and family violence, including impacts on First Nations people.

In June 2024, the ACT Government announced a \$375,000 investment to support coercive control training for frontline agencies. ACT Policing's \$100,000 allocation is supporting the development of academically designed training modules covering family violence dynamics, coercive control, and victim-centred, trauma-informed practice, to be embedded across the police training continuum.

All ACT Policing officers undertake a five-day DFV training program as part of recruit training, covering legislation, coercive control, family violence dynamics, lived experience perspectives and response procedures. Officers also receive specialist training in evidence-in-chief interviewing of vulnerable witnesses and victims. ACT Policing is progressing the design and implementation of a three-tier DFV training continuum for recruits, frontline leaders and specialist investigators, aligned with national police training guidelines.

2. Ahead of the introduction of specific legislation that criminalises coercive control in the ACT, I am confident that ACT Policing is making strong efforts to continue to build capacity to address coercive control, with officers being trained to recognise DFV as a pattern of behaviours over time rather than isolated incidents.

ACT Policing applies an evidence-led, pro-charge, pro-arrest approach, ensuring abusive behaviours are consistently identified, formally recorded and acted on as they emerge. In all cases, including where criminal thresholds are not yet met, ACT Policing adopts a pro-intervention approach, allowing police to document concerns, disrupt behaviour, and continue monitoring patterns of control, escalation and harm.

ACT Policing recognises that effective identification and response to DFV requires whole-of-system insight and coordination (noted in the [Biennial Review Report](#) [pg. 27]) and continues to actively engage with community-led and sector partners to build a fuller picture of victim-survivor experiences.

ACT Policing remains in discussion with the ACT Government throughout the development of the coercive control offence provision to ensure it is operationally viable and can be enforced effectively. ACT Policing is represented on the Steering Committee on the Criminalisation of Coercive Control alongside other stakeholders in the domestic, family and sexual violence sector. The Steering Committee is providing advice to Government to inform the development of the legislation, to be introduced in mid-2026. This work includes advice to me on measures to support implementation of the offence, and reduce unintended consequences, including risks of misidentification. The Steering Committee will consider, and provide advice on, options such as the merits to delaying the

commencement of the offence to provide necessary time for agencies to prepare and build capability to respond to coercive control as a standalone criminal offence similar to the approach taken by other Australian jurisdictions that have introduced such an offence.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



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

Date: 06/03/2026

This response required 5hrs to complete, at an approximate cost of \$436.68.