

Response to question on notice

Questions on Notice Paper No 15

06 February 2026

Question No. 851

Mr Shane Rattenbury MLA: To ask the Minister

1. What non-lethal weapons do ACT Police Officers carry.
2. Who carries the weapons referred to in part (1).
3. When are the weapons referred to in part (1) used.
4. How often are the weapons referred to in part (1) used on First Nations people compared to people who are not First Nations.
5. What are other tactics used by ACT Police, including but not limited to takedowns.
6. When are the tactics referred to in part (5) used.
7. How often are the tactics referred to in part (5) used on First Nations people compared to people who are not First Nations.

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

1. ACT Policing officers have access to a range of non-lethal use of force options, including:
 - Conducted electrical weapons (CEWs), also known as tasers
 - Oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray/chemical agent
 - Baton
2. The non-lethal equipment referred to in response to Question 1 are carried (as part of accoutrements) by sworn ACT Policing officers who have undergone dedicated training, are authorised and operationally deployed in accordance with operational safety requirements.

Carriage of equipment, whether specialist or standard issue, is contingent on training, certification and operational role, not rank alone.
3. Internal AFP Governance requires that force, including associated equipment use, is only applied, where lawful, necessary and proportionate to manage risk, protect safety, or effect a lawful outcome.

AFP Internal Governance emphasises communication, negotiation and de-escalation as the preferred response, with non-lethal weapons used where an escalation is warranted and the preferred options have been rendered ineffective or inappropriate.

act.gov.au

Some instances where an ACT Policing officer may use non-lethal equipment include where:

- a person is violent or threatening violence
- there is a risk of harm to police, the public, or the subject
- lower-level tactics (communication, presence, negotiation) are no longer effective or appropriate
- officers must gain control or compliance to effect a lawful arrest and to prevent injury

4. ACT Policing provide the following reasons as to why it is unable to service this request:

- An individual must first be apprehended before their status as First Nations or non-First Nations can be determined.
- Current data systems utilised by ACT Policing do not directly link use of force reports to apprehensions.
- While use of force records can be linked to matters at the case level, this does not allow reliable attribution to a specific apprehended individual, as a case may involve multiple persons.

As a result of the above reasons, it is not possible for ACT Policing to accurately determine the First Nations status of the individual to whom a particular use of force relates for the purposes of a data draw-down activity such as this.

5. ACT Policing uses a range of tactics to aid in their interactions with members of the public. Non-equipment related tactics, as referenced in the question, may include:

- Communication and negotiation
- Conflict de-escalation
- Physical restraint techniques
- Escort and restraint holds
- Handcuffing
- Searches of persons
- Physical force to enter premises or vehicles

Some of these may be classified as routine use of force, while others are reportable, depending on the level of force and context. These tactics form part of a graduated use of force model.

ACT Policing also has, in certain circumstances, the ability to request additional resources including but not limited to Tactical Response Units, who also carry additional non-lethal weapons such as extended range impact weapons and police canines.

6. The tactics referred to in Question 5 may be utilised by ACT Policing members in any case that they attend. Officers must actively assess and reassess the situation and utilise appropriate tactics to manage the situation at hand, focusing on apparent safety risks, prevention of harm, and enforcement of the law.

7. ACT Policing is unable to provide the breakdown requested by Mr Rattenbury MLA. As outlined in the response to Question 3, ACT Policing provide the following reasons as to why it is unable to service this request:

- An individual must first be apprehended before their status as First Nations or non-First Nations can be determined.
- Current data systems utilised by ACT Policing do not directly link use of force reports to apprehensions.

- While use of force records can be linked to matters at the case level, this does not allow reliable attribution to a specific apprehended individual, as a case may involve multiple persons.

As a result of the above reasons, it is not possible for ACT Policing to accurately determine the status of the individual to whom a particular use of force relates for the purposes of a data draw-down activity such as this.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.

M. Paterson

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

17/3/26
Date:

This response required 180mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$471.90.