

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee
Inquiry into the 2026-27 Budget Estimates

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE

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| Committee member: | Aiv PUGLIELLI |
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Transcript extract: Page 15

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you. On another matter, I am very aware there is a parliamentary inquiry into LGBTQIA+ hate crimes being committed against those community members. Is Victoria Police going to be making a submission to that inquiry?

Mike BUSH: Good question. I can come back to you on that, but I can say that through various forums and our focus and our culture within Victoria Police, we are very focused on supporting all members of the community but also very much the LGBTQIA+ community.

Question: Will Victoria Police make a submission to the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee's Inquiry into anti-LGBTQIA+ hate crimes in Victoria?

Response:

Victoria Police is not intending to make a formal written submission to the inquiry. However, recognising Victoria Police's interest in, and the importance of this inquiry, Victoria Police has contributed content to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing submission.

The Inquiry has requested that a Victoria Police representative appear at the inquiry to give evidence in lieu of a formal submission. Victoria Police has accepted this request.

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Part A

Transcript extract: Pages 13-14

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you, Chair. Good afternoon, Minister, Commissioner and officials. I will start my clock as well. Under the output 'Policing and community safety', budget paper 3, page 75, we see an item 'Delivering on bail reform for Victoria Police', which is for Victoria Police to maintain police custody cells and to support increased custodial medical capacity. During an outcomes hearing this committee heard that 94 people were held in police custody for more than 14 days for the 2024–25 period. Are you able to tell us: what is that figure to date this year?

Anthony CARBINES: I am happy to see if any of my colleagues want to give a more specific figure to date at the moment, and maybe while they just have a look to that I would also say that, as you have touched on, we have provided some further \$9 million in support for those who are held in police custody and the services that they need, because there has been an uplift in the numbers of throughput in police custody cells.

I have been to the Melbourne remand centre to meet with police and health officials and others that work there, and I commend them on the work that they do. It is tough work. It is hard work, particularly when people are in their care in custody. The numbers have moved around a little bit, and I suppose that is also why in last year's budget – and I will pass to my colleagues shortly – there was \$720 million to uplift the system, and we have made harsher changes to the law, tougher laws. We have then got more people in custody and they are managing the throughput in police cells. But did my colleagues have any particular figure they wanted to add at this point?

Mike BUSH: I am sure we can find the number, but I can say that it has increased, and for that reason we are working very closely with justice and corrections to again bring that number down. Whilst it is not unlawful, it is undesirable to have them there, so that is why we are working very hard to alleviate that issue.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you. And when you are seeking that number out, are you able to inform the committee of how many were First Nations community members?

Mike BUSH: We will certainly be able to provide that detail.

Question: How many people were held in police custody for more than 14 days in 2025-26 (year to date)? And how many of those held in custody for more than 14 days were First Nations People?

Response:

Victoria Police records point in time data on the number of people held in police cells each day. When considered over time the data reflects cumulative custody episodes rather than individual persons. The figure of 94 referred to by Mr Puglielli was provided to the Committee by the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS)¹. To ensure consistency of data source and counting rules when comparing reporting periods, it is respectfully recommended that this question be referred to DJCS.

¹ Refer page 91 of the *Report on the 2024-25 financial and performance outcomes*.

Part B

Transcript extract: Page 15

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you. I will go back to police cells, which you were just discussing. Given this output that I am talking about is also to support increased custodial medical capacity, how many people held in police cells during that period we discussed before – the 2024–25 period – were taken to hospital?

Anthony CARBINES: I would probably have to take it on notice for those sorts of numbers, unless there was a particular number that you wanted the department to provide. I think we would have to check on that.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: That is all right.

Question: How many people held in police cells during 2024-25 were taken to hospital?

Response:

The total number of individuals held in police cells who were taken to hospital in the 2024–25 financial year was 254.