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LIBERALS TARGET CONSTABLE KENNY KOALA

Constable Kenny Koala – the public face of crime prevention in the ACT – could be at risk under the Liberals' proposed multi-million dollar cuts to the ACT Government's justice area, Attorney General Simon Corbell said today.

The Liberals want to slash \$2.56 million over four years from the Policy Advice and Justice Programs area in the Department of Justice and Community Safety.

"These proposed cuts would have a massive impact on the majority of the legal policy and legislative reforms and justice programs," Mr Corbell said.

One such program would be Constable Kenny Koala who has educated Canberra's school students about safety for years.

"Constable Kenny Koala has been the public face of crime prevention and community based policing for more than 30 years," Mr Corbell said.

"It is an extremely important program targeted at primary school students and used to convey safety messages, encouraging students to feel comfortable asking a police officer for help if they need to.

"During 2007-08 Constable Kenny Koala visited 850 classes presenting safety messages to 14, 762 primary aged school students.

"It would be a shame if Constable Kenny Koala was jeopardised in any way and was unable to visit so many schools or engage with so many students in the future due to the Liberals' heartless cost cutting to fund their reckless election commitments."

Mr Corbell said the Liberals proposed cuts would also have an impact on community safety as the ACT's CCTV program would also be at risk.

"The cuts proposed by the Liberals mean there would be no funds for project management, maintenance or support of the CCTV camera infrastructure system," he said.

"CCTV is an important tool in tackling crime, particularly anti-social behaviour, and without maintenance or support the system would be ineffective. The Liberals' cuts are playing with the safety of the community."

Mr Corbell said the cuts could also affect the justice department's ability for legislative reform and policy advice with the proposed cuts equating to a loss of about eight to 10 staffing positions.

"This is just another example of how the Liberals can't be trusted," he said.

Statement Ends

Media Contact:

Tim Colquhoun 6205 0401 0401 146 895 tim.colquhoun@act.gov.au
(Minister Corbell's Office)

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