



OFFICE FOR ACT ABORIGINAL  
& TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER  
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE  
KEEPING OUR KIDS STRONG IN FAMILY & CULTURE



## **JOINT MEDIA RELEASE – UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 9.00AM 20/11/2025**

### **POLICE POINT GUN AT AN ABORIGINAL BOY IN CASE OF RACIAL PROFILING**

The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (ATSIEB), the Acting ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children & Young People Commissioner, and Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service and Yedding Mura are outraged following a shocking incident in which ACT Policing officers pointed a gun at the Aboriginal boy travelling on a public bus to visit family before realising he was the wrong person.

This act of racial profiling is outrageous, unacceptable, and a devastating breach of safety and trust.

The Aboriginal boy was travelling alone to visit family when police cars stopped the bus he was on. Police came onto the bus with weapons drawn, immediately approaching the Aboriginal child.

They did not ask his name, did not request any identification, and gave no explanation for their actions. The boy confused, frightened, and unsure what was happening complied with police orders.

Police forced the child off the bus and put him on the ground, handcuffed him face down whilst a number of other officers had their knees on his back causing him pain and difficulty breathing. This use of excessive force on a child is not acceptable. Police then compared a photo on their phone before declaring that they had the wrong person. Even after confirming that this was not the correct child, Police proceeded to search him.

The police then placed the Aboriginal child back on the bus without any proper apology. The boy is now experiencing significant trauma and distress because of the ordeal. This incident has also caused considerable concern for the family and right across the local Aboriginal community. The family were not even contacted following this critical incident to check on this child's wellbeing.

**“This is not policing — this is harm.”**

ATSIEB Justice and Community Safety Representative Kaylene McLeod said:

“A gun pointed at the Aboriginal boy on a bus is not a mistake — it is a catastrophic failure of judgement, process, and humanity. There is no world in which this response is justified.”

Acting ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children & Young People Commissioner said:

Because of racial profiling this child was endangered, terrified, and stripped of his dignity. Safety for children requires caution, care and proportionality none of which occurred here.”

Winnunga Nimmityjah CEO Julie Tongs OAM said:

“Our community is exhausted by incidents like this. This young person deserves safety, respect and protection — not a gun pointed at him. This cannot be excused or downplayed.”

**Family Demands and Joint Call to Action**

The boy’s family has requested:

- **Full investigation into the officers and their conduct**
- **Officers to be stood down during the investigation**
- **A formal, public acknowledgement of the misconduct and racial profiling of police**
- **An apology to the young person and their family**

ATSIEB, the Aboriginal Children’s Commissioner, and Winnunga fully support these requests and add the following urgent systemic actions:

- **Immediate independent investigation with de identified published findings**
- **Review of apprehension and use-of-force protocols involving children**
- **Mandatory and enforceable cultural safety training**
- **Clear, consistent consequences for breaches of policy and child safety**

**“No Aboriginal child in Canberra should ever face a gun because of police racial profiling.”**

Canberra cannot call itself progressive or safe while Aboriginal children continue to be subjected to policing practices that put their lives at risk.

The organisations reaffirm their united commitment to supporting the Aboriginal boy and his family, advocating for accountability, and demanding the reforms necessary to ensure this never happens again.

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**Media Contacts:**

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body**  
Kaylene Mcleod
- 0481 100 754
- **Acting ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children & Young People Commissioner**
- Barbara Causon  
0422 005 052.
- **Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services**
- Julie Tongs  
0418 206 156
- **Yeddung Mura**
- Priestly Obed  
1800 864 663