



PANSW
Police Association of NSW

**Media
Release**

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PUTTING COMMUNITY SAFETY FIRST

The Police Association of New South Wales (PANSW) is making a call for more understanding to be given to the essential role that police officers are playing to protect community safety during the COVID-19 crisis and has started a wider campaign called #ThumbsUp4SafeCommunities.

“Whenever there is a public crisis – and it has been an endless rollercoaster this year – the clear public expectation is that the police will put themselves in harm’s way to be on the streets to be the protectors of our communities,” says Tony King, PANSW President.

“The work that serving officers have been tasked with to police Public Health Orders has tangibly contributed to arresting the spread of COVID-19 and to saving lives. The experts have told us how to flatten the curve and Police are working to make that a reality. There should be no doubt about that.

“Continual nit-picking of the actions that officers have been tasked to perform makes for lazy headlines that ignore the core issue, namely community safety. On top of that the negative anti-police rhetoric that has been put out by some commentators has often been misguided, overblown and shameful.

“As confirmed by an ABS survey at the start of this week the percentage of the Australian public who have had a problem observing restrictions such as social distancing is as low as two percent. Enforcement action has been taken sparingly. The NSWPF has also been extremely transparent in providing daily infringement updates, and at the end of the day these are open to review”.

Mr King drew attention to the exemplary police role in policing quarantine zones at Sydney hotels as an example of stretching the thin blue line in the battle against an invisible enemy, the Coronavirus.

“Our members have constantly been at the coalface of COVID-19. They have been coughed at and spat on and abused and put into environments that carry the risk of infection, and yet every day they pull on the uniform to fulfil their oath to keep and preserve the peace without favour or affection, malice or ill-will,” says Tony King.

“This week 250 new police officers have been welcomed into communities across New South Wales. Next time you see police officers in the street, why not give them a (socially distant) thumbs up to thank them for what they do, remembering no matter the circumstance they are fulfilling a commitment to hold that thin blue line for you. Try it and you may get a reciprocal thumbs up in return”.

Media contact: Stephen Olsen – PANSW Communications Coordinator | Phone: 0488 009 805
PANSW Facebook @pansw.org.au | Twitter @PoliceAssocNSW

High-res photos available on request | See more about the Thumbs Up campaign here:
<https://pansw.org.au/news/articles/thumbs-up.html>