



POLICE ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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Tragic Event Used as Resources Grab

The Police Association of NSW has today slammed the findings from Operation Calyx into the death of Adam Salter by the Police Integrity Commission (PIC) which were tabled in Parliament today and called on the Commissioner of Police to reject the findings.

Police Association President, Mr Scott Weber said, "These officers have our full support. We are confident that the Commissioner of Police will make his own independent assessment of the actual evidence surrounding this matter. The Commissioner of Police took this course of action in relation to the highly controversial PIC Operation Rani Report and we call on him to deal with this report in the same manner.

"The PIC has come under mounting criticisms for failure to afford police officers due process and natural justice. Confidence in the Commission has been undermined by numerous findings by the PIC Inspector of failures to afford police officers procedural fairness.

"These failures have led the Inspector of the Police Integrity Commission to be highly critical of multiple PIC operations including: the Alford Report, Operation Whistler, Operation Mallard and Operation Rani.

"There seems to be one rule for police and another for the watchdog. Police officers, especially our senior officers have lost confidence in the PIC to perform to the same high standards that are expected of the police officers. Police welcome oversight and transparency, however having multiple bodies' has resulted in an unseemly turf war. The report again highlights PIC's grab for more resources and staff.

"This is a tragedy for all concerned, but fundamentally it represents the failure of the mental health system. This tragedy also highlights the need for personal recording devices as these would capture footage of what the officer is confronted with, from their own eyes – ensuring there is no room for doubt as to versions of events. This would also assist people who were not present to understand why the police took the action that they did," Mr Weber said.

All Police Officers face challenging and confronting situations on a daily basis. They leave their families to go out and risk their lives to protect others, sometimes in heartbreaking circumstances. Police guard human life and it's only as a last resort, in a situation where lives are in danger, that split second decisions have to be made.

Recent efforts to provide police with training in managing the mentally ill are to be acknowledged, but there is much more that needs to be done. The Mental Health Intervention Team, established by the NSW Police Force (NSWPF), will only have trained 10% of all NSW operational police by the end of 2015.

Mr Weber said, "Understanding and appropriate ongoing training for police officers, who are the first responders in many incidences, is crucial when dealing with distressed individuals suffering from mental illnesses, but Police are not medical practitioners and our involvement is often when situations have reached an extreme stage.

More needs to be done to ensure that mentally ill people within our community, and their families, receive the medical support that they need before situations become critical. Access to high quality, long term medical care is essential."

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PRESS RELEASE