



POLICE ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PO Box A1097, Sydney South, NSW 1232

PHONE: (02) 9265 6777 FAX: (02) 9265 6789

EAGLENET 57070

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Chief Magistrate refuses to allow police to wear firearms in court

The Police Association of NSW has condemned the current protocol supported by the Acting Chief Magistrate and some members of the judiciary, which strictly prohibits police officers wearing, or carrying firearms in court buildings.

Police Association President, Scott Weber, said “Our members have expressed grave concerns regarding their security in courtrooms and court complexes, for themselves and for the people in these courts on any given day.

“What world do some in the judiciary live in? Certainly not the one they are entrusted to preside over. And certainly not the one of ordinary people or police, who recognise the new reality is one of global events having very real local effects both on policing, and on the people in communities we protect.

“The risks are real and not theoretical, despite what the judiciary continue to believe. The recent stabbing of two of our fellow officers in Melbourne is a stark reminder of this escalating threat to all police.

“The niceties of complicated legal arguments come a long way behind concern about security and saving lives. The face of policing has forever changed as we confront new adversaries and increasingly complex problems. It’s not good enough for police to be told the security risks are being continually and closely monitored and assessed; in the meantime people and police are vulnerable and left exposed to danger while at court.

“The judiciary should be supporting police not binding their hands behind their backs and telling them to hope for the best. Judges, Magistrates and court officials can’t always control what happens in the courtroom.

“What do those members of the judiciary want police to do when confronted with a violent situation in the pressure cooker environments of courthouses?

“Let’s be clear on this, the safety of both police officers and the community is at risk. The safety of either cannot be guaranteed as police officers are going into courtrooms with criminals who are engaged in all kinds of criminal activity, much of it violent. We don’t always know who these offenders have associated with; this is a tragedy waiting to happen.

“Police and the public can remain as vigilant as you like, but this alone won’t be enough to prevent violence and harm to anyone at a court facility. The Chief Magistrate has a duty of care to all people using court facilities – and is clearly failing in that duty by adopting this protocol.

“More so now than at any time, police need to be equipped with the tools and provided the resources they need to protect the people of New South Wales. The Association will not waiver in our commitment to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of all NSW Police Officers.”

Media contact: Alison McLaughlin – 0414 918 470

PRESS RELEASE