



POLICE ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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Weekend of Violence in Wagga – More Police Needed Now

The Police Association of NSW has renewed its calls for urgent action on police numbers following two ugly attacks in Wagga over the weekend.

The first assault occurring in the early hours of Saturday morning was a vicious face and neck stabbing. A 37-year-old man was arrested and charged with malicious wounding causing grievous bodily harm to a 28-year-old man, who was allegedly stabbed in the throat and face with a broken bottle.

The second incident involved a woman threatening neighbours while brandishing a knife and threatening to kill police and their families. The 44-year-old was taken to Wagga Police Station, charged with assault, resisting arrest, intimidating police and custody of offensive implement.

Police Association Southern Region Executive Member, Mick Connor said, “These are just two examples of what police have to put up with every weekend and every day of the week with very limited resources. The violence in Wagga cannot be ignored and the weekend assaults further highlight the urgent need for action. Local police are at breaking point after years of trying to pave over all the cracks that staffing shortages create.

“If multiple violent incidents were to occur simultaneously, current police shortages would put the safety of both police and the public at risk.

“The solution is simple; the state government needs to step up now. I and Police Association President, Scott Weber met with state member for Wagga, Daryl Maguire last Friday to reinstate negotiations with the state government to forge a First Response Agreement with the NSW Police Force (NSWPF).

“This meeting followed three years of attempts to negotiate a response, which has repeatedly been refused by the NSWPF due to insufficient numbers.

“Mr Maguire said he took our concerns very seriously; he has already lobbied the Minister following our meeting. Today in light of what has happened over the weekend, we call upon Mr Maguire to continue to aggressively lobby the Minister and the Premier, and tell them to give us the resources and provide the extra 32 officers the Association has identified. (The Wagga branch is calling for four additional Sergeants and 28 additional Constables across the LAC to assist with major issues, including illicit drugs.)

“We owe it to local police and the local community to secure an immediate commitment from the state government to increase police numbers. We shouldn't have to resort to industrial action to force the Government into doing the right thing, they are aware of the problems and three years is a long time to wait, especially for the officers bearing the brunt of this inaction.

“If the Government doesn't do what is needed industrial action will take place.”

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PRESS RELEASE