



POLICE ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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EMBARGOED until: 6am Friday 30th January 2015

Local Police Fed Up and Considering Industrial Action

The Police Association of NSW is calling on the Baird Government to give an immediate commitment to the people of Wagga to increase police numbers.

The Wagga Branch of the Police Association has attempted for over three years to renegotiate a new First Response Agreement with the NSWPF. Unfortunately, the response to date has repeatedly been that the NSWPF are unable to provide this due to insufficient staff available.

Police Association President, Scott Weber, said, "We are fed up and our members have had enough with the ongoing delays & constant stalling in negotiations to resolve this issue. Wagga Local Area Command statistics from the NSWPF demonstrates the Command is one of the busiest in the State, but it operates well below the strength needed to provide a timely response to the community.

"There is no doubt we have a strong argument for an increase in staffing levels. The Command has a work load exceeding many busy metropolitan commands with some of those commands having in excess of 36 additional staff. On top of their own resources, Metro Commands have immediate access to back up with units such as Public Order and Riot Squad, Crime Agencies, Police Air Wing and crash investigation units.

"There is a heightened terrorist threat to the local community with critical infrastructure and the RAAF and Army bases located at Wagga, and with the current staffing levels local police may not be able to respond appropriately. Drugs are also a significant issue in the region, yet one of the biggest inland cities in NSW is unable to supply a full time drug investigation unit. The increased work load and risk to officers who are left to work with limited back up or supervision cannot be underestimated. Numerous officers are on sick leave or restricted duties due to work place injuries, both physical and psychological.

"In 2008 the Wagga Branch sought additional police and Local Member, Daryl Maguire MP, who was in opposition at the time stated, "*Urgent action is required to increase the numbers of police in each of the above areas, (Custody Manager Sergeants, Highway Patrol, Criminal Investigation, Proactive police and Crime Management Unit) to allow the appropriate duties to be carried out in a timely manner.*"

"We now call on Mr Maguire to stand by his commitment to deliver and to make sure Wagga is adequately policed to ensure the safety of all his constituents. The Wagga Branch is seeking a commitment of four additional Sergeants and 28 additional Constables comprising the following staffing allocation:

- Three additional General Duties Sergeant Positions;
- One additional Detective Sergeant Position (Drug unit);
- Twenty additional Constable Positions (General Duties);
- Six additional Detective positions;
- Two Constable Positions in Criminal Investigation.

"It's time for politicians, from the Local MP to the Premier, to recognise the Wagga community deserves the same level of policing as metropolitan communities. We will continue to work with all decision makers for adequate police numbers and resources to ensure community safety.

"However, the Wagga Branch has reached the point where they are unable to continue working in the current agreement and will commence escalating industrial action if the matter is not remedied in the very near future."

PRESS RELEASE