



POLICE ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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MISSED OPPORTUNITY BY THE CORONER

The Police Association of NSW (PANSW), today said the coroner had missed an opportunity to address a broken mental health system failing our most vulnerable people in time of crisis.

Australia Post employee Stephen Hodge was shot dead by a police officer in Lake Macquarie after coming at him with a kitchen knife in September 2015.

In handing down her inquest findings at Glebe Coroners Court on Friday, Deputy State Coroner Teresa O'Sullivan suggested NSW Police consider integrating mental health in tactical response training and the practice of de-escalation techniques through role playing.

PANSW PRESS CONFERENCE: 2.30PM TODAY NITHSDALE LANE, SYDNEY

Police Association President, Scott Weber, said, "Police Officers go to work with the sole focus of protecting the community; they do not want a tragic outcome while carrying out their duties.

"The death of Mr Hodge was nothing but tragic, deeply affecting his family, work colleagues and the police involved. No one wanted this outcome and all attempts were made to avoid it.

"It's time to address issues that not only impacted on the outcome but focus on the lead up and the myriad of problems and systematic failures that led to this event and similar events occurring in the first place.

"The entrenched failure to protect people with mental health issues before they reach crisis point needs to be acknowledged, as does the woeful lack of resources for mental health support across NSW.

"There is a beginning, middle and end to these tragic situations and all should be scrutinised. Not just focusing on the last few moments of an incident when it occurs."

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PRESS RELEASE