



**PANSW**  
Police Association of NSW

**Media  
Release**

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## **BOCSAR data shows little sign of relief from onslaught of assaults on police officers**

Unacceptably high figures for assaults on police have continued in 2019 even before an annual spike expected over the Christmas and New Year period says the Police Association of New South Wales (PANSW).

“In serving and protecting communities across the state, our members are well aware of the risks they face and that there is no ordinary day. As we enter Christmas and New Year they will, sadly, be contending with more violence and out-of-control behaviour fuelled by alcohol and drugs,” says Tony King, PANSW President.

“Over the last decade the data on various types of assault of police officers released regularly by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) has shown the level has remained stubbornly stuck around 2500 per year, or nearly 50 per week.

“Further to this we have sourced new datasets from BOCSAR on patterns of sentencing for offences that go to court, and we are releasing a snapshot of that data for the first time. **[SEE attached]**.”

“We have been fortunate in 2019 that no lives have been lost in the line of duty,” says Tony King.

“Over and above injuries from physical assaults and biting incidents, there have been too many close calls such as the officer who received serious shotgun wounds in Penrith in October, and life-threatening wounds from stabbings involving a hunting knife at Central Station in April and a homemade spear at Sadleir in June. This is just the tip of a very long list and barely indicates the physical and mental harm that impacts our members.

“All offences that are attacks on police officers need to be seen to carry serious consequences, but we have an acute concern that offenders who appear before court are not being meaningfully deterred when they are sentenced, and that many are repeat offenders.

“In 2019 we have commended two members of the judiciary who have taken a stand – Magistrate Alan Railton who sentenced an offender in the Gosford Local Court to a custodial sentence rather than an intensive corrections order because of the seriousness of the incident, and Magistrate Bruce Williams who stated in Hornsby Local Court that ‘anyone assaulting a police officer [will be] dealt with more seriously’.

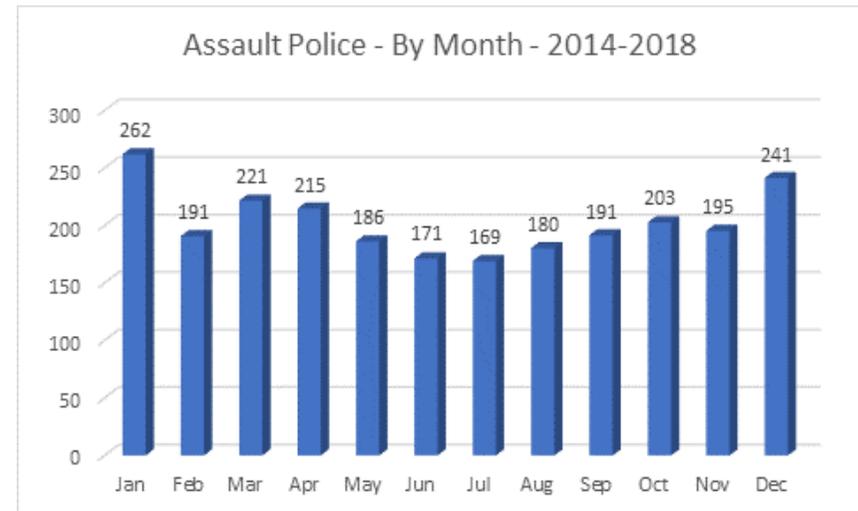
“All we want on behalf of our members is for them to be able to go about their duties and their everyday lives safely. The message isn’t complicated: When a person is approached by an identified police officer they, along with friends or family, just need to ensure that they respond respectfully. It’s not too much to ask”.

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Unless otherwise noted the information source for this snapshot overview is data from BOCSAR  
(the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research | <https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/> )

**1. Five-year average for offences of resisting police and assaults on police**



**Note:** In 2018, 50% of assault police incidents were recorded as alcohol related. Some studies have suggested that in entertainment precincts on Fridays and Saturdays, when assaults on police are most frequent, alcohol is a factor in 70% of assaults on police.

## 2. Sentencing outcomes for the 18 months between 1 January 2018 and 30 June 2019

Offence	Total number of finalised charges	Total that move to a guilty conviction	A1. Number in which the principal offence for sentencing was against a police matter	A2. Percentage of Custodial sentences when convicted *	A3. Average non-parole period for Custodial sentences	A4. Non-parole period range (lowest/highest)
Resist/ hinder police officer	2652	2163	<b>806</b>	42 (5%)	3months	1 month / 8-9 months
Assault police officer	1285	945	<b>467</b>	70 (15%)	6 months	0-1 month / 1-2 years
Assault police causing actual bodily harm	396	281	<b>204</b>	69 (34%)	7 months	1-2 months / 2-3 years
Cause grievous bodily harm (GBH) to police officer	7	3	<b>3</b>	0 (0%)*	-	-
Wound with intent to resist arrest	6	4	<b>3</b>	3 (100%)	32 months	All in 2-3 year range
Use offensive weapon to prevent police investigation	30	13	<b>5</b>	4 (80%)	10 months	5-6 months / 1-2 years
Intimidate police officer	1147	928	<b>303</b>	71 (23%)	5 months	0-1 month / 1-2 years
Harass police officer	63	48	<b>28</b>	5 (18%)	4 months	0-1 month / 7-8 months
Throw missile at police officer	32	24	<b>10</b>	1 (10%)	3 months	3 months

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

\* One case involved a juvenile, while the other two resulted in an Intensive Corrections Order and a Suspended Sentence

### Also noted:

- The genders of people committing assaults on police (*at the time of court proceedings* in 2018): Male = 66.6%; Female = 33.4%
- In the first two columns the vast majority of matters that do not proceed to sentencing are due to factors such as dismissals due to mental illness, withdrawal by prosecution or transfers (eg. to Drug Court)
- The percentage of persons who assault police officer and who had a previous proven court appearance (for any offence) in the previous five years is between 60-65% - 18% have 5 or more proven court appearances, and 20-27% commit another offence within the next 12 months after assaulting a police officer. This shows a large number of offenders who assault police are repeatedly committing crimes.