



PANSW
Police Association of NSW

**Media
Release**

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Police Association responds to Inquest into drug deaths arising at music festivals

The Police Association of New South Wales has voiced strong concerns that the Coroners inquest process for drug deaths at festivals has turned its members into a political football.

“I can’t say loudly enough that the role of police at festivals has been to responsibly conduct reasonable policing duties,” said Kevin Morton, acting President of the Police Association of New South Wales.

“Regrettably aspects of the inquest turned into an unbalanced and unjust blame game. Furthermore any inference from the Coroner when findings are published that our members have contributed to the deaths of festival goers would be offensive and wrong.

“The men and women of the NSW Police Force are charged with maintaining and ensuring public safety. They all take an oath to discharge all of their duties to the best of their skill and knowledge “faithfully according to law”.

“It is beyond tragic for any family to lose a loved one. The role we play is to protect the young and the vulnerable so that they go home safe. That’s a clear community expectation,” said Kevin Morton.

“What we need to hear more about is that lives are being saved. That’s where our members make a real impact. The festival season is already underway and make no mistake there will be drug dealers exploiting young people yet again. Detecting that activity has to remain a priority.

Mr Morton added: “We are not shying away from the need for a wider public debate – but the forum for that is not the Coroners Court. We would be in favour of a Drug Summit to allow expert debate and to go about this in a proper, balanced and fully thought through manner”.

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