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## **NSW cop savagely bitten Police call for changes to infectious disease testing**

An incident in Brighton-Le-Sands which saw a female police officer savagely assaulted and bitten highlights the need for the NSW Government to make urgent legislative changes to minimise the time cops and their families are forced to wait for the results of infectious disease testing, the Police Association of NSW says.

The officer will now have to wait six months for the details of an infectious test to return to find out if anything has been transmitted to her.

The assault is the latest in a string of attacks on police in recent weeks, a number of which have also resulted in officers being bitten.

President of the Police Association of NSW, Tony King, said the Association is calling for changes to legislation that would allow offenders who attack police in incidents like these to themselves be tested for infectious diseases. The change would allow police to find out if they're at risk much sooner.

"This officer and her family now face an incredibly anxious wait have to find out whether she's been infected with any diseases," Mr King said.

"This is a horrific thing for police officers and their families to have to endure. This officer like many others will now have to change their lifestyle for fear of passing on possible infection. Can you imagine explaining to your own child why you can't give them a kiss goodnight?"

"This shocking incident highlights exactly why we need urgent government action to address the red tape that is forcing cops to wait months to find out if they're at risk of infectious disease.

"It also highlights the unique, unpredictable and dangerous nature of policing. Police put their lives on the line every single day to keep our community safe. It's about time we respected not just the uniform but the person inside that uniform.

"Unfortunately, incidents like this are not uncommon. Offenders frequently smear blood and spit on officers. We also have needle stick injuries with used syringes. When that happens, police are forced to endure these torturously long wait times simply because the government hasn't bothered to fix the red tape that would ease the pain of officers.

"It's time for the government to act to on the disgusting practice of exposing police officers to bodily fluids and diseases.



“The current system is causing serious physical and psychological trauma to police as they wait for test results. The government could easily ease officers’ suffering, but for some reason they’ve refused to act.

“What we need is the power to test the offender in order to provide some reassurance to the police and families involved.”

“We have had a parliamentary inquiry into the issue, the government has the recommendations, we need them to act.

“Five other states in Australia have the power to test offenders, NSW lags behind these states. We need this power now.”

Mr King said the incident also highlighted the need to fund and expand the Workplace Improvement Program – a program which assists police with their physical and psychological wellbeing.

“The Workforce Improvement Program works, but unless the coalition Government commits to increased funding, it cannot be rolled out to regional areas.

“Every police officer in the state should have access to rehabilitation and injury prevention programs, not just police in Sydney.”

**PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE ASSAULTED COPS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST**

**TONY KING is available for media comment today**

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