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## MEDIA RELEASE

### Violence Against Emergency Services Personnel Report Released

The Law and Safety Committee's report regarding violence against emergency services personnel has been tabled in State Parliament, Committee Chair Mr Geoff Provest MP announced today.

Mr Provest said the report contained 13 findings and 47 recommendations aimed at preventing violence against emergency services personnel, and dealing with it appropriately where it occurs.

"First and foremost we want to prevent violence against emergency workers from ever happening" said Mr Provest. "These people perform vital work for our community, in both paid and voluntary roles, and they are entitled to return safe and sound to their families at the end of each shift. Where violence does occur, there must be strong measures in place to address it".

The Committee was pleased to find there are already a range of measures in place to prevent and address violence against emergency services personnel, including the 12 point action plan to improve security in NSW public hospitals; and sentencing laws that provide a matter is to be dealt with more seriously where the victim is an emergency services worker.

However, the Committee was concerned to find there is a tendency for emergency services workers to underreport violent incidents. Mr Provest stated, "To address underreporting of violent incidents, the Committee has recommended a focus on improved incident management reporting procedures. It has also recommended greater focus on violence prevention training for staff, and improvements to duress response measures and interagency procedures to manage aggressive persons".

In the area of sentencing, the Committee found the public has a right to know that people who commit violence against emergency services personnel are dealt with appropriately by the courts. Therefore, the Committee has recommended increased public access to sentencing data. It has also recommended the NSW Government consider a review of the sentencing power of the Local Court, the court that deals with most matters involving violence against emergency services personnel.

During the inquiry, the Committee also heard a proposal from the NSW Police Association for mandatory disease testing of people whose bodily fluids comes into contact with emergency services personnel in certain circumstances. The Committee has recommended this proposal be explored further by the NSW Government, in consultation with all affected stakeholders.

The Committee received 35 submissions from a range of stakeholders during its inquiry including the NSW Government; interstate Government Ministers and agencies; unions and employee groups; peak bodies; community groups; legal experts and individuals. It also heard evidence from 25 witnesses at two public hearings held in November 2016; and further evidence from 6 witnesses at a public hearing held in February 2017.

For media comment, please contact Geoff Provest on (07) 5523 4816. Further information about the inquiry and the report can be obtained by visiting the Committee's webpage at <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lawandsafety> or by contacting Elspeth Dyer, Committee Manager, on (02) 9230 2214.