

QTON #	Questions and context	NSWPF Response
Questions taken at the Hearing		
1	<p>Mr EDMOND ATALLA: Thank you for the written submission, Assistant Commissioner. In one of the statistics that I looked at the local government area of Sydney has the highest number of assaults on police officers throughout all of the local government areas in New South Wales, including regional local government areas. Can you share a view as to why this is the case?</p> <p>Assistant Commissioner McCUSKER: Can I just clarify, are you making reference to essentially the central metropolitan region in terms of those statistics?</p> <p>Mr EDMOND ATALLA: No, it is by local government area where the incidents occurred</p> <p>Ms TAMARA SMITH: It is the first on the list.</p> <p>Mr EDMOND ATALLA: It has the Sydney local government area, which is the Sydney City Council, as the highest number in July 2019—</p> <p>Ms TAMARA SMITH: Nepean is the highest and then Sydney City.</p> <p>Assistant Commissioner McCUSKER: Yes.</p> <p>Mr EDMOND ATALLA: For some reason I do not have that. Nevertheless, Sydney City is very high. It has 353 assaults in total for that one year. I am just wondering if you have a view as to why this is the case. Is it particular, because we do not have a breakdown of suburbs within that local government area.</p> <p>Assistant Commissioner McCUSKER: No, in terms of the "why" I will take specifically that question on notice to get some greater detail in terms of Sydney City Council, noting the high-density area of that location. I will take that question on notice to get some greater detail, clarity and analysis for that.</p> <p>Mr EDMOND ATALLA: I am specifically talking about local government areas rather than commands. Mount Druitt does not show up on here because Mount Druitt is not a local government area. If you could take that on notice, Assistant Commissioner, because that will be helpful. If we know where the areas of high assaults occur, maybe we can drill down some of the causes and whether there is other relationships or cultural issues to be aware of.</p> <p>Assistant Commissioner McCUSKER: Absolutely, I will.</p>	<p>Sydney City is known to have a large transient population that travel into the city for work, entertainment and dining purposes. It is highly likely the high number of assault police offences in the Sydney City LGA relates to the large population of people who frequent the area. The consumption of alcohol, movement between licenced premises and residential areas likely contributes to the high number of assault police offences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In 2019, most assault police offences occurred in public places with only 6 offences occurring in residential locations (5 residential dwelling, 1 residential accommodation). - 18 offences occurred at railway stations, 22 in licensed premises and 41 in outdoor/public place. - 60% (59 of 99) assault police offences in 2019 had the associated factor alcohol related. Sydney City LGA has the largest number of licenced premises per LGA in NSW. <p>BOCSAR reported in their June Quarterly that between July 2019 and June 2020, 353 assault police offences occurred in Sydney City LGA. NSWPF does not have LGA data breakdowns. However, Sydney City, South Sydney, Kings Cross and Surry Hills PAC is indicative of offences in the Sydney City LGA. This sample is not exact as the PAC borders do not align perfectly with Sydney City LGA.</p> <p>Across the four PACs, there were 341 assault police offences. The following shows the breakdown of incidents by premises type:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outdoor/public place - 169 - Residential - 46 - Public Transport - 34 - Licensed premises - 25 - Business/commercial - 10 - Carpark - 1 - Health - 18 - Law Enforcement (police station/building) - 34 - Recreation - 2 - Vehicle - 2 <p>Of the assault police offences between July 2019 and June 2020 in Sydney City, South Sydney, Kings Cross and Surry Hills PAC, 49% (167 of 341) had the associated factor of alcohol related.</p>
2	<p>Mr EDMOND ATALLA: The Chair has raised the issue of police engagement with schools through school liaison officers and youth liaison officers. I am not aware if this program is at a command level. I am not aware that police officers visit their local schools, both primary and high schools. Are there any guidelines as to what information could be made available to members of Parliament about such a program at the level of local command areas? One of the issues that is coming out of this inquiry is the early engagement with the police and the schoolkids to instil that relationship and that will go a long way towards it. Are you aware of programs at local levels?</p> <p>Assistant Commissioner McCUSKER: Yes, certainly with the youth liaison officers. As I have previously mentioned, we have 78 of those youth liaison officers across at the police command or police district, so it is at that local level. In terms of the school liaison, police currently have 43 of those. That is managed from our youth command and capability. I will take that question that you have asked in terms of the various programs and locations.</p>	<p>Youth Officers (previously Youth Liaison Officers) duties in schools relate to primary schools. They are often seen as the 'friendly face' of police to young kids, giving talks and guidance about 'stranger danger', bicycle safety, and internet safety to name a few. They are attached to individual commands across New South Wales. The responsibility and tasking of Youth Officers belongs with each individual command. Youth officers are responsible for identifying youth at risk or those coming into the criminal justice system and working with other government and NGO agencies to assist in diverting the youth from this pathway. They are responsible in every PAC or PD for ensuring police are fully trained in the use of the Young Offenders Act and that appropriate decision making is occurring in relation to youth being either charged or diverted from the criminal justice system.</p> <p>School Liaison Police are attached to Youth and Crime Prevention Command but work from within the Crime Prevention Units within commands. Their role is to engage with secondary and central schools to reduce youth crime, violence, anti-social behaviour through a range of interventions strategies, and educational presentations. The role involves creating local relationships with schools and the community which model respect and responsibility.</p> <p>Youth and Crime Prevention Command holds responsibility for the 43 School Liaison Police (SLP) and are responsible for their core duties and tasks within schools across New South Wales. Their duties relate to secondary and central schools.</p> <p>School Liaison Police are responsible for servicing Department of Education schools within commands that are assigned to each position. School Liaison Police within the Greater Sydney area will service multiple commands, where School Liaison Police in regional NSW may only cover one command due to the tyranny of distance. Their primary interaction with students is by way of presentation.</p>

		<p>School Liaison Police deliver presentations on a wide range of issues including but not limited to; Cyber Crime and Cyber Safety (AFP owned "Think U Know"), Drugs and Alcohol, Domestic Violence (Love Bites), Risk taking behaviour, Property Damage, and Harassment and Assault. School Liaison Police deliver these presentations at the request of a school based on issues that schools are experiencing. The most commonly requested presentation is Cyber Crime and Cyber Safety (AFP owned "Think U Know").</p> <p>Youth and Crime Prevention Command, in partnership with Education and Training Command and the Department of Education, are in the process of reviewing and re-writing the content that is being delivered by School Liaison Police. It is envisioned that this content will be created and approved to be delivered from the start of the 2021 school year.</p> <p>School Liaison Police engage with schools in relation to incidents that occur in schools to provide support and advice around incidents such as assault. This could then lead into the need to deliver presentations to certain cohorts within the school to prevent further incidents occurring through education.</p> <p>Youth and Crime Prevention Command are also in the process of creating presentations for a Year 6 transition program. The aim of this program is to engage with Year 6 students in Term 4 of the school year and present to them on a range of issues including but not limited to; who police are and what they do, violence, drugs and alcohol, and Rail Safety and Transport Offences. This will be presented by School Liaison Police, in collaboration with Youth Officers. This presentation is crime prevention initiative aimed at early intervention and a means to introduce students going from Year 6 into Year 7 to the School Liaison Police in their area. This will be piloted at two (2) areas in the Sydney Metropolitan Region in Term 4 2020.</p>
3	<p>Mr EDMOND ATALLA: Yes, that is fine as long as it is statewide across the commands. I do not want the answer to come back and say, "We've got 78 servicing New South Wales". That does not help. In relation to mental health issues, do you have any stats or percentage of police officers who develop mental health issues as a result of assaults on them? How many of your workers compensation claimants end up with mental health issues?</p> <p>Assistant Commissioner McCUSKER: The complexities around our officers who have a psychological claim, I do not have that data that is specific, that it results from a particular incident or a particular assault.</p> <p>Mr EDMOND ATALLA: You have indicated that you have 1,600 assaults this year.</p> <p>Assistant Commissioner McCUSKER: Yes.</p> <p>Mr EDMOND ATALLA: Can we get a feel for how many of those 1,600 would result in mental health issues? Is that something that can be measured or not?</p> <p>Assistant Commissioner McCUSKER: When an incident happens to a police officer an assault is recorded on the police Computerised Operational Policing System, COPS, but we also have an injury management system where that injury is recorded from an internal perspective for that police officer to capture that from an internal perspective, which then goes towards potentially either the workers compensation or at times just to actually record that incident. They may or may not have received treatment. They may or may not have had time out of the workplace. So the question that I take it that you are asking is the correlation between those 1,600 assaults against police and then a correlation against our internal recordings of the assault and what happened to that officer.</p> <p>Mr EDMOND ATALLA: Yes.</p> <p>Assistant Commissioner McCUSKER: I will take that question on notice to have a look at that correlation.</p>	<p>This data is not captured as a discrete data set.</p> <p>The purpose of the P902 is to record the workplace injury, trigger the reporting obligations and ensure the officer receives the treatment and support they need.</p> <p>The number of assaults on police that may be reported in the COPS system is different to that captured in the P902 system, as not every assault results in an injury.</p> <p>The two systems have very different purposes.</p> <p>Psychological injuries from assaults may not manifest for several years post event or be cumulative from multiple events, thus skewing the data.</p>
4	<p>Ms TAMARA SMITH: If the incident report includes a physical assault and then the officer self-disclosed that they were not sleeping or that there was something that would allude to a psychological injury, would that still count as a single assault in terms of the stats that the Police Force is putting forward? There might be a range of things. If they were punched four times, would that correlate in the statistics as four assaults or is it all one incident? Are these incidents or are these actual assaults? If they are incidents, then I am wondering whether there is so much more happening to police that is not captured by these data.</p> <p>Assistant Commissioner McCUSKER: If the officer was recording a particular incident as to what happened today, then it would capture that as one incident and, therefore, as I mentioned earlier, if there was bruising received, if there was swelling received, if they were affected psychologically, that is captured together but we are able to draw that information out.</p> <p>Ms TAMARA SMITH: Would you be able to find out for us if that would count? I understand the limitations for us in the sense of being able to know what went down and the context. But I am just trying to understand it in terms of the figures that BOCSAR has and that are in this submission which talk about the number of assaults on police. This year there are 1,600 assaults. Are they 1,600 incidents? If in one incident a police officer was assaulted twice—in terms of the law there were two physical actions or assaults—would it be captured as still just one incident for these statistics? Is that what they are saying? They have not gone through and said, "That is actually six assaults that have happened on that officer."</p> <p>Assistant Commissioner McCUSKER: Yes, and I suppose that links in terms of the law. If there has not been a separation of those incidents, then it is captured as one, and that is in line with what is determined by the law as well.</p> <p>Ms TAMARA SMITH: I see.</p> <p>Assistant Commissioner McCUSKER: So I will take your question—</p> <p>Ms TAMARA SMITH: Sorry, Assistant Commissioner. So it is assault in the sense of a charge, the criminal threshold for assault—</p> <p>Assistant Commissioner McCUSKER: Our internal we capture differently because we can capture a few things. But I will take your question and get some clarity for you.</p> <p>Ms TAMARA SMITH: Yes. I guess what I am alluding to is the question of whether there is an underrepresentation of actual harm. We are looking at this in terms of assaults, so it is a bit contested what we even mean by that. We have not really discussed psych injury at all. I am wondering what the relationship is between an entire traumatic event, what has actually happened, and the statistics. It could be far worse than the statistics suggest. What I am trying to understand—and I am sorry if I am just thick as a brick—when BOCSAR is doing the statistics and when the Police Force is doing statistics, what is the definition of an "incident" or an "assault"? I would really like to know that..</p> <p>Assistant Commissioner McCUSKER: We will take that question for you.</p>	<p>The assault officer statistics included in the submission were produced using the same methodology BOCSAR used to produce assault statistics. It includes the number of 'Assault Officer' incidents recorded on the NSW Police Force Computerised Operational Policing System (COPS).</p> <p>Each time an officer is assaulted on a separate occasion i.e. at a different time and/or in a different place, this is recorded as a separate Assault Officer incident in the COPS system and counted as such in these statistics. Where an officer is assaulted multiple times in quick succession as part of the same set of circumstances, this would be recorded as one incident and counted as such in these statistics. Information on the nature of the assault, e.g. how many times punched, is captured in the event narrative and while it cannot be statistically reported on, the information is available to be reviewed.</p> <p>For a number of punches to be counted as multiple assaults, there would have to be a sufficient break in the continuity of the offence to make them separate incidents.</p> <p>In lay terms, an assault is the application, or fear of application, of unlawful force from one person to another. The extent of the force will vary from incident as will the extent of the injuries.</p>
5	<p>Mr MARK TAYLOR: Are you aware of whether the fundamental statistic on assaults, that is the one we say has increased dramatically, or I think we all agree remains stable, does that include obstructing, hinder and resist and those other types of lesser offences? Are you aware?</p> <p>Assistant Commissioner McCUSKER: I would have to take that question on notice. I do not have the details you are referring to in terms of hinder police charges.</p>	<p>The statistics provided to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety include physical assaults only and may not include figures relating to other assaults such as being struck with an object or shot with a firearm, obstructing, hinder and resist and other types of offences.</p>

Supplementary question for NSWPF

<p>6</p> <p>Mr EDMOND ATALLA: Would you know what percentage of schools engage with the school liaison officers? Ms O'BRIEN: No, we do not actually hold any data in relation to that. I am not sure if New South Wales police would have any data in relation to that either. Mr EDMOND ATALLA: So we do not know because you have indicated that there are 40-plus liaison officers to service 300-plus schools— Ms O'BRIEN: Three thousand. Mr EDMOND ATALLA: Sorry, 3,000 schools. I am just wondering what percentage of schools actually miss out on having a school liaison officer? I suppose, Chair, we can have that as a question to the NSW Police Force. The CHAIR: Indeed.</p>	<p>School Liaison Police are responsible for servicing secondary and central schools.</p> <p>The Standard Operating Procedures for School Liaison Police (SLP) state that they are required to contact the Department of Education schools within their area on a minimum of one (1) occasion each school year. School Liaison Police also attempt to engage with schools outside the those covered by the Department of Education i.e Private Schools. In reality, SLP are proactive in attending High Schools in their areas of responsibility on an almost daily basis. They are often sought out by School Principals to talk to emerging issues within the school community or an acute issue that has arisen pertinent to that school. For example topics around violence, "sexting", drugs etc.</p> <p>Incidents that occur in Department of Education School, such as assaults are reported to the School Safety and Response Unit. The reporting parties are advised to contact the School Liaison Police for assistance and support, where appropriate, as follow-up to incidents occurring. Youth and Crime Prevention Command are also provided with this information which is distributed to School Liaison Police to engage with the school to ensure this contact is made.</p> <p>Youth and Crime Prevention Command have Youth Case Managers that operate out of PCYC club locations across NSW.</p> <p>Youth and Crime Prevention Command are currently exploring cross training both roles to allow for and ensure greater coverage on a needs basis.</p>
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