

**Submission
No 6**

ASSAULTS ON MEMBERS OF THE NSW POLICE FORCE

Name: Mr Christopher Quiring

Date Received: 28 August 2020

Policing is a career with unique risks, risk that have unfortunately become so common place that the wider community accepts them as just “part of the job”. What other career, comes with an inherent hatred and risk of assault just from pulling on the uniform? I and my family live with this reality knowing that every day when I leave for work, I may not come back.

As a general rule no one is happy to see a Police officer. For victims, their interaction with Police comes at some of the lowest point in their life - they have been robbed, assaulted, or lost a loved one. The same can be said of offenders - interaction with Police is a low point. As a Police officer, people are rarely happy to see you. This situation leads to a general dislike and distrust of Police, a feeling that has only amplified with increasing globalisation over the last 10 years, predominantly due to social media. We are now at a point where not only are we hated by individuals based on their own experience with Police, but hated for that actions of Police in other states or even other countries.

This dislike and often hatred, has led to a general feeling of apathy towards assaults on Police officers. I have seen this apathy in the general public, the judiciary and even in Police. We have all come to accept that Police will be assaulted as part of their job and that these assaults are inconsequential, they are not!

In this job I have been punched, kicked, bitten, and spat on. I have had a 5 year old child try and stab me while his parents laughed – that one hurt more than any other time some has tried to stab me. I have had people run and run me down in cars, I have been attacked by the very victims I am trying to protect for arresting their partner’s. I have sat in court and watched offenders be acquitted of these attacks, issued bonds and basically get away with it. How have we as a society reached a point where driving with a disqualified license will send you to gaol, but assaulting a Police officer will be brushed aside? I have watched one day, while someone who spat on a bartender was issued significant fines and compensation order’s, yet another person given a bond for kicking a Police officer in the testicles. How can we expect the situation to change when even the courts appear to place less value on us then on others?

Policing has changed every aspect of who I am and how I interact with the world. We call it situational awareness, but the reality is, it is a fear that lives in the background of our life, constantly watching for threats that exist when I work and extending into my personal life. When I go into a café with my family, I sit so I can see the door, monitor who is coming and going, staying alert, staying safe. Working in a small community I know that at any point I may run into people who will attack me for the perceived slight of arresting them, they have plainly stated it to my face, threatened me and worse threatened my family. It is a common occurrence that when out in public with my family, I will disappear. This happens as I have seen someone I know has the potential to cause them harm, just for being my family. So far, I have been lucky. I have seen people before they see me. I have friends who have not been so lucky, having offenders arrive on the doorstep of their homes, armed and threatening to kill them or attacking them in the shops in front of their children. Assaults on Police officers don’t just impact the officers, families have suffered as a consequence.

A line needs to be drawn in the sand, attacking a Police officer is not acceptable - on or off duty. Threatening an officer or their family is not acceptable. Police officers are people too.

We bruise, we bleed, we carry the trauma, sometimes we carry it well, all too often not so well. With trends like the Black lives matter movement, people claim they want a more humane Police force - how about treating us the with the same respect and rights as every other person?

I can tell you now, I did not join the Police force to be assaulted, it is not as I have been told many times by friends, family, the general public and even my colleagues' part of the job, it should never be and we must stop accepting it as such.