



# POLICE ASSOCIATION OF TASMANIA

## MEDIA RELEASE

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## Don't blame the victims: Police Association

The Police Association of Tasmania has condemned comments that blame police and emergency service workers for being the victims of assaults, stating that they undermine police morale and potentially endanger the community.

Sergeant Randolph Wierenga said, "People who blame the victims of attacks exonerate their assailants. It is exactly this vindication of offenders who punch, kick and spit on police and emergency workers that the Police Association is attempting to address.

"By blaming the victim, we undermine the integrity of Police and the integrity of the Justice system. Blaming the victim perpetuates a reluctance of victims to come forward and report crime, something that the ABS recently revealed was a real problem in Tasmania.

"What do those who seek to blame the victim expect that police will simply not protect the community because they could be at risk of being blamed for being assaulted? Are they prepared to take responsibility for this potential threat to community safety inherent in their comments?

"Despite these ludicrous comments, police and emergency services will continue to protect the community. But they expect reasonable protection and to be supported at work. No one deserves to be assaulted, no one deserves this kind of slander, and no one deserves to be blamed for their injuries at work.

"Police are the one of the most highly accountable professions. Their every action is subject to 20/20 hindsight through the Courts, Internal Investigations, the Ombudsman and soon the new Integrity Commission. They have the strictest Code of Conduct and are subject to random drug tests, Integrity testing which can involve entrapment and furnishing of financial details. Much of their work is subject to constant video surveillance.

"Let's be clear - the problem of assaulting police and emergency workers is stark. Denying it and blaming the victim is destructive and undermines the integrity of frontline police and emergency service workers – and if followed logically, undermines community safety," said Sergeant Wierenga.

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