



AFPA BULLETIN:

Support for Members Involved in Saturday Night's Tragedy

25 March 2010

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The last few days have seen intense media focus on police as a result of the tragic quadruple fatality that occurred in the ACT on Saturday night. While the officers who were directly involved in the pursuit of Justin Williams belonged to the NSW Police and not the AFP, there is no doubt that the crash has had numerous implications for ACT Policing and the AFP more broadly.

The AFPA's primary concern is for those officers who were required to attend at the crash site and/or are involved in the ongoing investigation of the incident. While some officers may wish to use the well-being services supplied by ACT Policing in order to debrief from the weekend's events, we are aware that this option may not be necessary or suitable for everyone. Sometimes it is easier and/or more appropriate to seek out a colleague for a chat after such an experience. With this in mind, two of the AFPA's delegates have made themselves available should you wish to discuss your thoughts and feelings relating to last Saturday's tragedy.

ACT Policing Zone Coordinator Angela Smith can be called on 0401 742 606 or Workplace Delegate Nick Clarke can be contacted on 0412 235 853.

There is no doubt that the decision by the NSW Police Officers to pursue Justin Williams and his passenger Skye Webb into the ACT has provoked a great deal of media comment regarding the police role in the accident, much of it negative. Fortunately, it would appear that the vast majority of public opinion is sympathetic to the role of the police in such situations. This is despite the media bias that has given great weight to the uninformed and emotionally-driven comments of the victim's families and other commentators. Nevertheless, both the NSW Government and the Opposition Leader have demonstrated support for the Police Officers involved in the incident and have defended current procedures governing police pursuits. This view has also been expressed in the ACT by the Police Minister and Attorney-General Simon Corbell.

NSW Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione has stated in the media that our thoughts and sympathies should not only be with the victims and their families but also with the NSW Officers who have been forced to endure the trauma of being involved in this horrific accident. The AFPA fully agrees with Commissioner Scipione and would like to extend this sentiment to those AFP Officers who attended at the scene of the accident.

The AFPA is not able to comment on the circumstances surrounding the collision due to the ongoing nature of the investigation. However, we fully support those who have come out in the media defending the actions of the NSW Police Officers. It should be remembered that Police do not start pursuits but are forced into such actions as a result of the dangerous actions of criminals. The Association's thoughts are with everyone who has been affected by this tragic event.

If you have any comments on this bulletin or any other queries please contact your local representatives or the AFPA National Office on afpa.office@afpa.org.au.

Authorised by

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