

True Crime Australia > Police & Courts

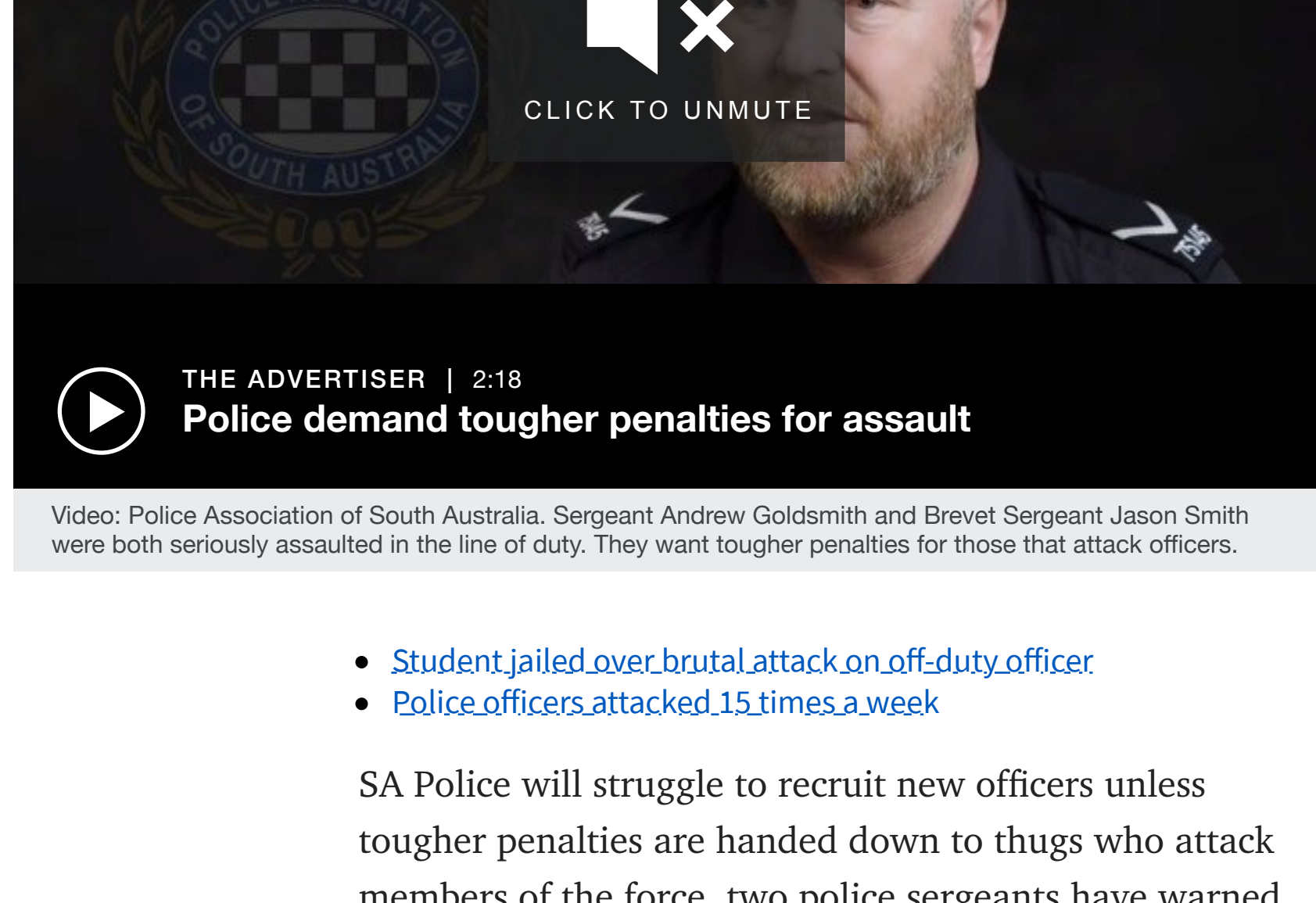
SA Police Association warns of violence risk to current officers and deterrence to future recruits

Assaults against our serving police officers are already bad enough, warns the Police Association of SA. Unless the attackers are penalised, they say new recruits will fear entering the force.

Elizabeth Henson Political reporter

@Eliz_henson June 6, 2019 · 1:38PM The Advertiser

21 comments



Video: Police Association of South Australia. Sergeant Andrew Goldsmith and Brevet Sergeant Jason Smith were both seriously assaulted in the line of duty. They want tougher penalties for those that attack officers.

- [Student jailed over brutal attack on off-duty officer](#)
- [Police officers attacked 15 times a week](#)

SA Police will struggle to recruit new officers unless tougher penalties are handed down to thugs who attack members of the force, two police sergeants have warned.

Brevet Sergeant Jason Smith and Sergeant Andrew Goldsmith appear in a new video released today by the Police Association of South Australia as part of its campaign for changes to laws that deal with assaults against police and other emergency service workers.

The video has been published on the [Association's website](#) and [Facebook page](#).

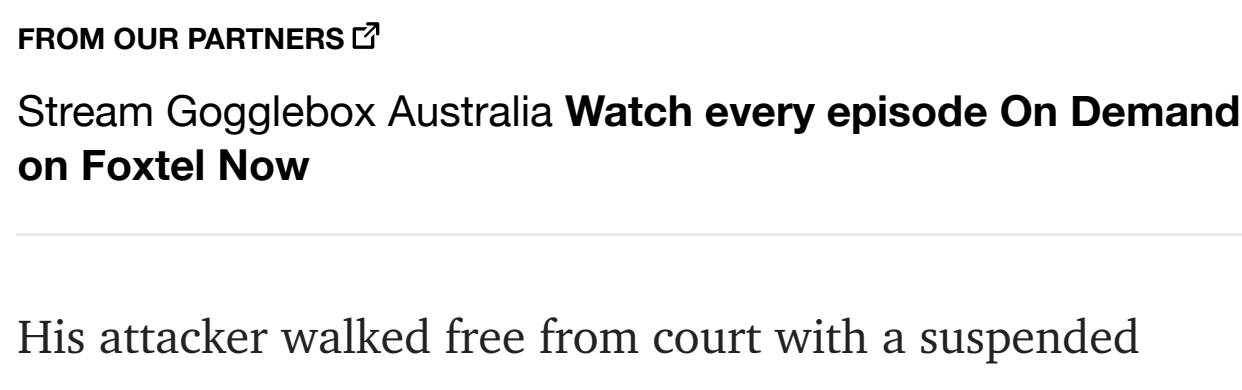
As revealed by *The Advertiser* this week, [police officers were attacked 771 times](#) – equal to about 15 assaults a week – in the 12 months to April 30 this year.

SA Police statistics showed there was an eight per cent increase in the number of assaults against police during this period compared to the previous year.

A student was this week jailed for at least 18 months for a [brutal attack on an off-duty officer](#).

The Association wants harsher penalties and stronger laws to deal with and deter people who attack police and emergency service workers.

Sgt Smith knows all too well the dangers of being in the force and says too many offenders are flouting the laws.



Brevet Sergeant Jason Smith: "There are too many families, officers, that are suffering at the hands of how lenient the courts have been." Picture: Police Association of South Australia

He was hospitalised after an offender kicked him in the knee during a violent rampage in Adelaide's northeast in January 2018.

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His attacker walked free from court with a suspended sentence.

"There are too many families, officers, that are suffering at the hands of how lenient the courts have been," he said in the video.

"As soon as (offenders) walk out the court doors, they're laughing at the court, laughing at us.

"We need to be looked after a little better than what we have been in the past."

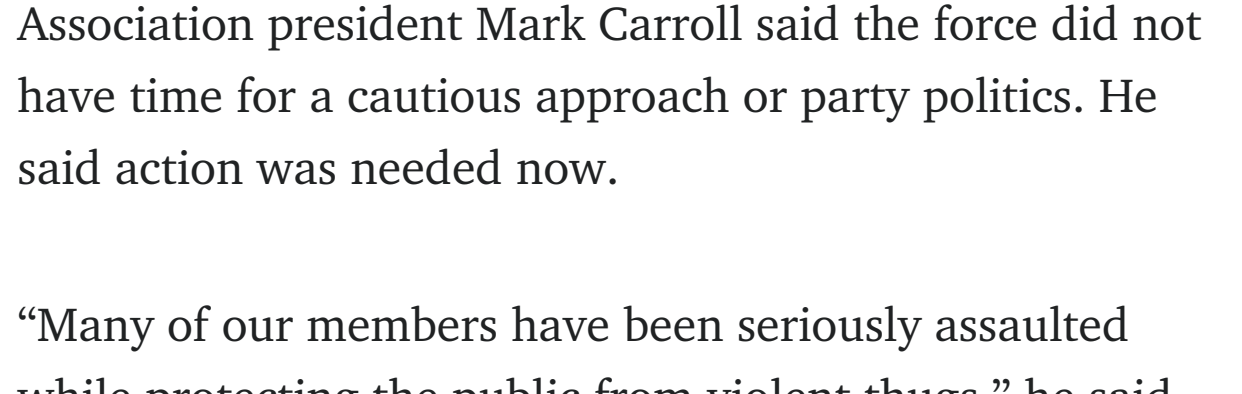
Sgt Smith said harsher penalties for offenders would send a clear message that their violent behaviour would not be tolerated.

He said if this did not happen, potential police recruits would shun the force.

"We will really struggle to recruit new members," he said.

Sgt Goldsmith sustained serious head and neck injuries when two offenders attacked him in Hindley St in the city in April 2017. Both of his attackers also received suspended sentences.

"Current laws are a joke," he said.



Sergeant Andrew Goldsmith: "Current laws are a joke." Picture: Police Association of South Australia

"I joined up knowing that I would be the person running into danger when everyone else was running away but I also expected that the courts would be there to protect me in the event that something happened to me.

"Why would anybody want to join up with an occupation where you're unsafe, that you might be assaulted at work, knowing that there is not going to be any consequence for the offender who's done it?"

The Association has thrown its support behind [Opposition legislation](#), introduced into parliament on Wednesday, that would create a specific criminal offence, with tough penalties, for assaulting and injuring police officers and emergency service workers.

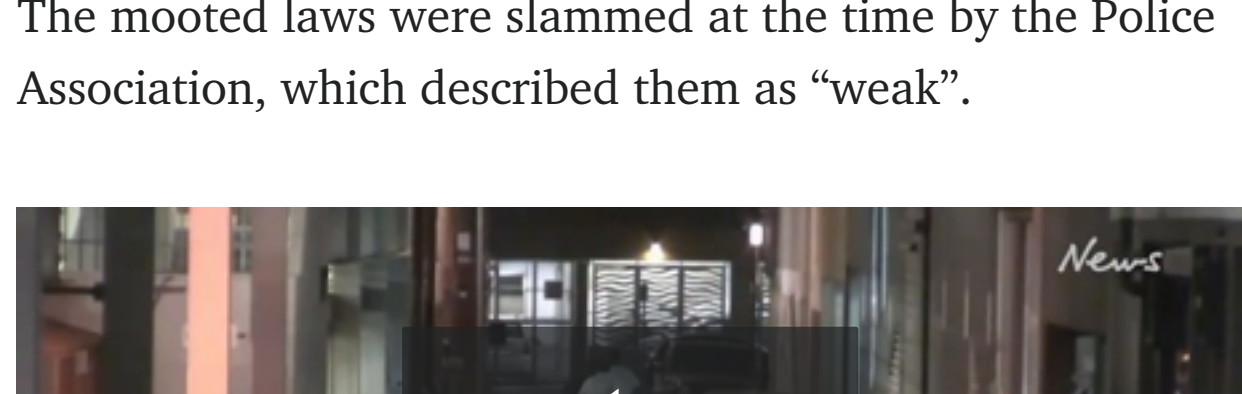
It would also ensure a criminal who had already received a suspended sentence for injuring a police officer or emergency service worker could not have their sentence suspended again.

Thirdly, it would compel the courts to make penalty decisions based on what would deter people from attacking officers and emergency service workers.

Association president Mark Carroll said the force did not have time for a cautious approach or party politics. He said action was needed now.

"Many of our members have been seriously assaulted while protecting the public from violent thugs," he said.

"The public are angry about this."



Police Association of SA (PASA) president Mark Carroll with Senior Constables Tash Smith and Paul Jeffs – two more officers who were assaulted at work. Picture: AAP / Brenton Edwards

"If (Attorney-General) Vickie Chapman and (Premier) Steven Marshall don't listen to this groundswell, that public feeling is going to be referred toward the government they lead.

"Our members, and indeed new recruits, will never hesitate to put their bodies and lives on the line for the community – all we ask is that these criminals are dealt with appropriately by the legislation and the courts."

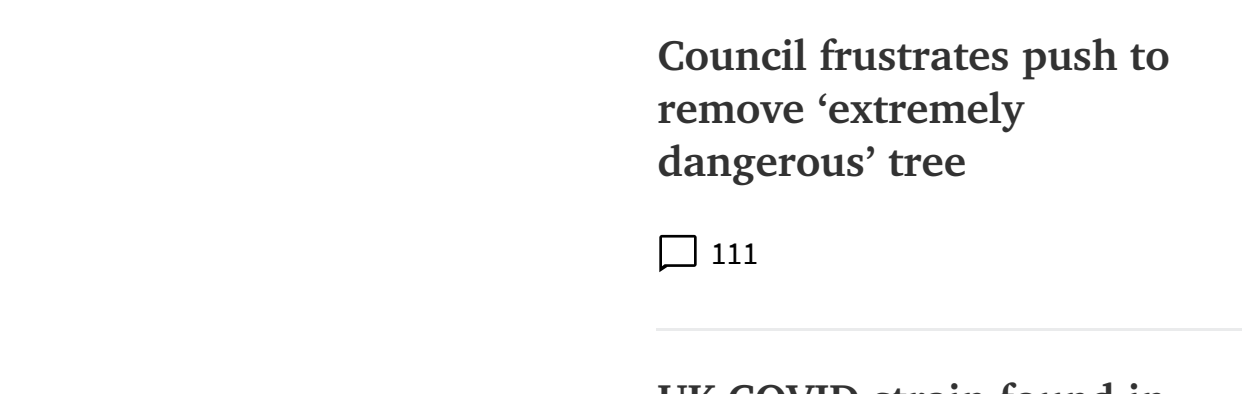
The Government introduced [its own legislation](#) into parliament last month that would see people who assault police and emergency service workers jailed for an extra year.

The maximum penalty for assault causing harm in these instances would rise from four years in jail to five while the maximum penalty for threatening harm, recklessly causing harm or committing acts likely to cause harm would rise from seven years in prison to eight.

The maximum penalty for intentionally causing serious harm would remain at 13 years' jail while the intentionally causing serious harm would still attract a maximum penalty of 25 years' prison.

Safeguards for police and emergency services would be considered by a judge when determining a penalty under the proposed changes.

The mooted laws were slammed at the time by the Police Association, which described them as "weak".



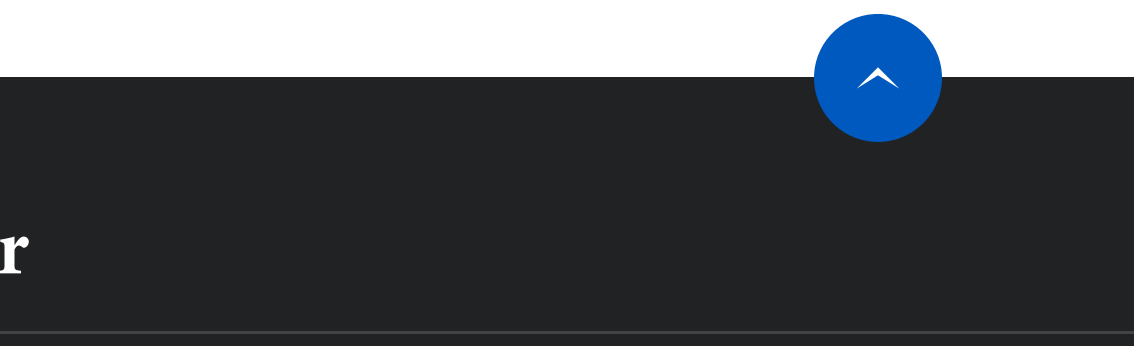
CCTV footage shows the horrific bashing of an off-duty SA Police officer by Wolf Magot Door and two accomplices in November 2015.

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