

New laws are being introduced to target knife crime in our community

What you need to know

The NSW Government is introducing a range of new measures to address the issue of knife crime.

We have recently seen the devastating impacts of knife violence, including deaths. These crimes can have long lasting impacts on communities. For people carrying or using knives, their decisions can also change their lives forever.

The Knife Scanning laws¹ aim to target the possession of knives and reduce knife related crime while boosting community safety.

What are the new measures?

The Knife Scanning laws are designed to disrupt and prevent knife-related violence and incidents, and reduce the incidence of knife crime. They are designed to improve overall safety and community confidence.

The new laws include an increase in the penalties for selling knives to children who are less than 16 years of age. They also make it an offence for a person, without a reasonable excuse, to sell a knife to a child who is 16 or 17 years of age.

They allow for police to use hand-held scanners to search for knives and other weapons, in some circumstances.

How will the new powers work?

The Knife Scanning laws give police the power, without a warrant, to require a person in a designated area to stop and submit to the use of a hand-held scanner in relation to knives and other weapons. This can apply in designated areas.

A senior police officer may declare a place a designated area only if certain offences have occurred at the place in the previous 12 months.

The senior officer must also consider that the use of a handheld scanner is likely to be effective in detecting or deterring knife crime.

They must also consider the impact on lawful activities, if a declaration has previously been made for that place, and whether knives or weapons were found during that declaration.

What kind of places can be declared?

The following places may be declared as designated areas:

- Public transport stations such as train stations, bus stops and transport interchanges;
- Public transport vehicles including buses, light rail vehicles, ferries, and trains;
- Shopping precincts;
- Sporting venues; and

- Other public places prescribed by the regulations, including places at which special events or events supporting the night-time economy are being held.

What safeguards are in place?

Safeguards apply when a police officer requires a person to stop and submit, or resubmit, to the use of a hand-held scanner. For example, police should use their body worn video when exercising a power under these laws. Police must exercise the power in the least invasive way practicable and may only detain persons for as long as is reasonably necessary.

What are the penalties?

It is an offence to fail or refuse to comply with the requirement made by a police officer under these laws.

Penalties of up to \$5,500 can apply for not complying without a reasonable excuse.

It is an offence to carry a knife in a public place, if you do not have a reasonable excuse for having it in your possession.

Penalties of up to \$11,000 or imprisonment of up to 4 years can apply for carrying a knife without a reasonable excuse.

When will the new laws come into effect?

The new laws commenced on 9 December 2024.

Further information

For further information, including any current declarations, check the NSW Police Force website or scan the QR code.

