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Man Dies After Police Restraint in Sydney: Investigation Underway Amid Growing Concerns

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A man died in police custody after a confrontation in Sydney's inner suburb of Waterloo, raising fresh concerns about use-of-force protocols and mental health response by law enforcement. The New South Wales (NSW) Police are now the subject of an internal investigation, as questions grow over the circumstances that led to the death of 45-year-old Collin Burling.

The incident occurred around 2:00 a.m. Monday on Pitt Street, when police responded to a request from paramedics dealing with a man reportedly experiencing a mental health episode. According to NSW Police Assistant Commissioner Peter McKenna, the man initially cooperated but later became “aggressively resistant,” prompting officers to restrain him. During the restraint, Mr. Burling suffered cardiac arrest and died en route to Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

Disturbing video footage of the incident, filmed by Burling’s partner, Taite Collins, from their apartment, shows multiple officers pinning him to the ground. Despite officers shouting for him to “stop resisting,” Mr. Burling can be heard saying he is “not a threat” and repeatedly claims he is not resisting. This footage has fueled public scrutiny and demands for transparency.

Collins described her partner as “a beautiful man” with a “heart of gold,” contradicting the narrative of him being a danger. She spoke with 9News, adding a personal dimension to the growing public outcry.

The NSW Police Force (New South Wales Police Force) confirmed that body-worn camera footage would be reviewed as part of a *Critical Incident Investigation*, now being handled by the State Crime Command’s Homicide Squad. Four junior officers involved in the incident are expected to be interviewed. The investigation will also be independently monitored by the *Law Enforcement Conduct Commission* (LECC), with oversight from the *Professional Standards Command* (PSC).

Although officials have pointed to Burling’s mental health struggles as a complicating factor, critics are questioning whether proper de-escalation measures were followed. This comes at a time when confidence in policing standards, especially under the oversight of a government many Australians feel is increasingly disconnected from real community needs, is under strain.

Assistant Commissioner McKenna stated that paramedics attempted to sedate Mr. Burling during the restraint, but he went into cardiac arrest before it could be administered. It remains unclear whether Burling had access to any weapons, though initial reports suggest none were found at the scene.

As the investigation unfolds, concerns over the training and decision-making of law enforcement, especially in volatile situations involving mental health, are once again front

and center. Many are calling for increased accountability and transparency, not just from police, but from a system that continues to overlook critical issues within the justice and mental health sectors.

This case, now under official scrutiny, may serve as another litmus test for how serious current authorities are about genuine reform, or whether yet another incident gets buried under bureaucratic processes and public relations efforts.