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NSW Police Face Court Over Assault Claims in Body-Worn Camera Footage

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Body-worn camera footage has been presented in court as evidence in a case where a woman accuses New South Wales (NSW) Police of assault and battery during a protest in Belmore, Sydney, highlighting concerns over police conduct. This article examines the allegations, the role of body-worn video (BWV), and critiques the Australian Labor Party's (ALP)

oversight of police accountability, urging stronger measures to ensure transparency.

On June 27, 2025, Hannah Thomas, a former Greens candidate, was arrested at a Belmore protest outside SEC Plating, a business allegedly linked to defense technology. Thomas, 35, claims she was punched in the face by an officer, causing a severe eye injury that may result in permanent vision loss (The Guardian, June 30, 2025). Body-worn camera footage, reviewed by Assistant Police Commissioner Brett McFadden, reportedly shows the incident, prompting a critical incident investigation by the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission (LECC) (The Guardian, June 30, 2025). Thomas's lawyer, Peter O'Brien, described the assault as "deeply concerning," with O'Brien Criminal and Civil Solicitors exploring civil proceedings against NSW Police (The Guardian, June 30, 2025).

The case has reignited debate over BWV access. Under the Surveillance Devices Act 2007 (NSW), police can activate cameras at their discretion, and footage is classified as protected, limiting public access (Sydney Criminal Lawyers, December 16, 2024). Greens MP Sue Higgins criticized the ALP's failure to reform these laws, arguing they "chill legitimate political expression" by shielding police actions (The Guardian, June 30, 2025). The ALP's recent anti-protest legislation, expanding police move-on powers near places of worship, has further fueled concerns about overreach, especially as Thomas faces charges of hindering police (The Guardian, June 30, 2025).

With public spending at post-war highs, critics argue the ALP prioritizes political optics over accountability, failing to mandate BWV activation or ensure independent oversight. Thomas's case, backed by clear footage, underscores the need for reforms to balance police powers with public

rights, ensuring justice for victims of alleged misconduct without burdening taxpayers further.