



Melbourne Debating Academy Regional Grand final

That police should carry only tasers

Background:

It is not necessary to define “tasers”, however, it may be necessary to define police (ie. what part of the police does this topic relate to). A model may be used, but is not required.

Police brutality has been the subject of great debate in the political sphere, particularly following the rise of groups like Black Lives Matter (BLM) in 2020. Many organisations like BLM suggest that the police institutionalise discriminatory practices, and thus, have called for the defunding of police groups, and more stringent policies surrounding the weapons they may carry, and the code of conduct they are subject to.

This debate has a more niche focus on specifically the weaponry that police carry. Specifically, your job is to analyse whether the community is safer if the police **ONLY** have tasers.

In layman’s terms: how much weaponry does the police need to do their job of keeping the community safe?

The key fact to consider when it comes to tasers is that they are non-lethal to the average person, except in unique circumstances, for instance, where the individual has a pacemaker. That means that when police are equipped with only tasers, we anticipate that they only have the ability to exert non-lethal force (which has its advantages and disadvantages). Consider how this might impact their responsiveness to situations where lethal force might be necessary. In fact, this raises the question of whether lethal force is ever justifiable, and when?

One team needs to answer the question of exactly how many weapons the police need to do their job. From there, they need to clearly explain how this maximises benefits for the community by making it as safe as possible. They then need to explain why any less or more guns is good/ bad.

So affirming need to explain how the community can still be safe even if police only have tasers, and how this has other benefits.

And negating need to explain how the community would be safer if the police had more than just tasers, and how this has other benefits.

The key thing is that both teams need to explain why the community is safer on their side, and explain why it is less safe under the opposing argument.

Key questions for consideration:

- Does this debate apply just to Australia?
- What weapons do police carry at the moment? (What is the status quo?)
- What are the issues with the weapons police carry at present?
- Is the community safer when police are heavily armed?
- What are the issues with tasers at the moment?
- When is force necessary?
- Should the actions of a few reflect the whole? (group justice)



Resources:

<https://www.9news.com.au/national/all-victorian-police-officers-and-psos-to-be-armed-with-tasers/319ec79e-5287-4da2-8146-db03c923a408>

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/victoria-to-issue-all-frontline-police-with-tasers-20211223-p59jrp.html>

<https://theconversation.com/police-prefer-to-carry-tasers-but-would-that-make-anyone-safer-71646>

<https://athenspoliticsnerd.com/should-police-have-tasers/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/thomasbrewster/2021/04/14/mistaking-a-taser-for-a-gun-20-billion-non-lethal-weapons-giant-axon-thinks-it-can-replace-the-police-pistol-for-good/?sh=595b3e211b78>

<https://www.nytimes.com/article/police-tasers.html>