
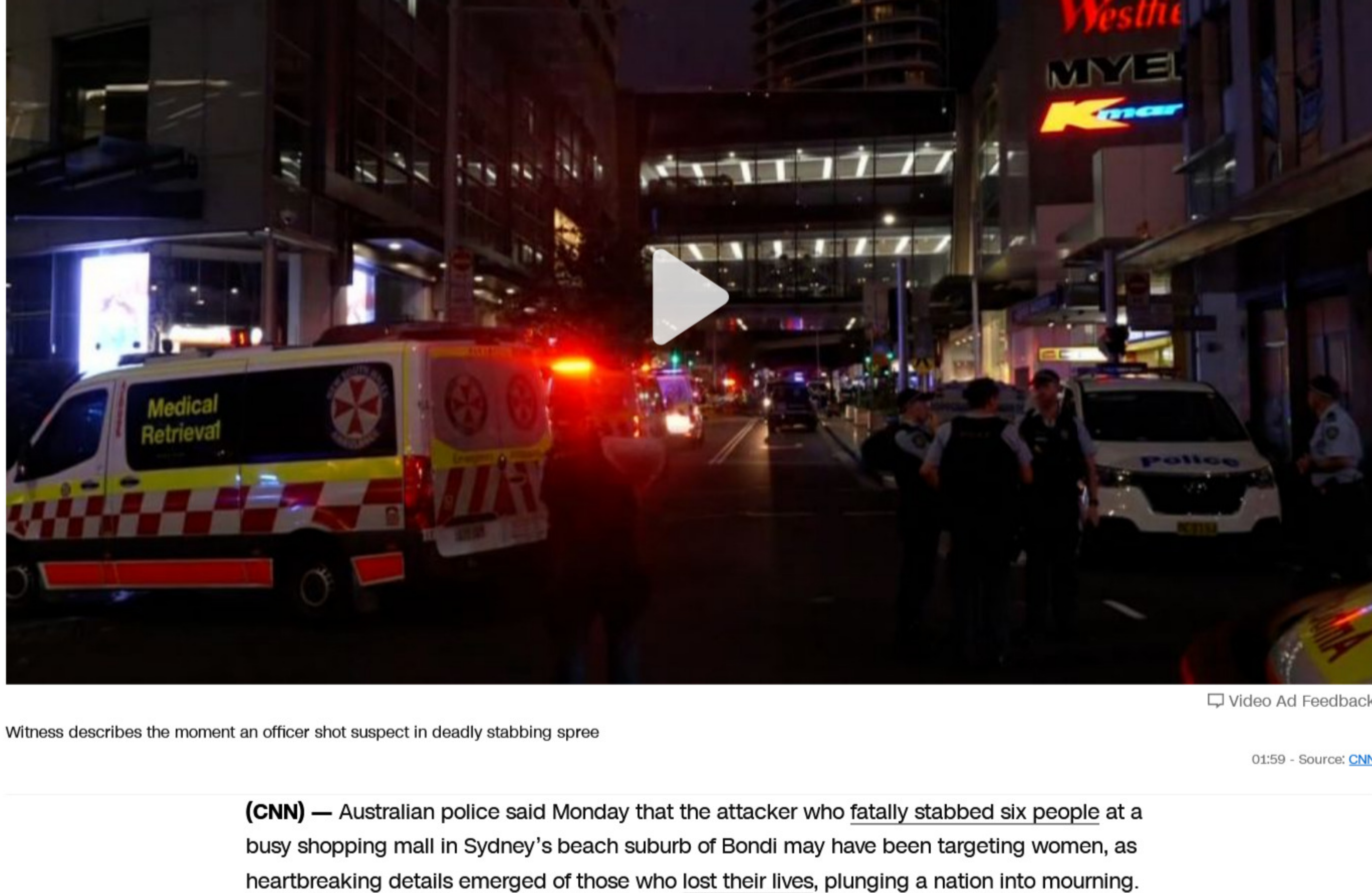


Sydney mall attacker may have targeted women, police say, as more details emerge of his six victims



By Helen Regan and Sandi Sidhu, Teela Rebane, Dhruv Tilsekar, CNN

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Witness describes the moment an officer shot suspect in deadly stabbing spree

01:59 - Source: CNN

(CNN) — Australian police said Monday that the attacker who **fatally stabbed six people** at a busy shopping mall in Sydney's beach suburb of Bondi may have been targeting women, as heartbreaking details emerged of those who **lost their lives**, plunging a nation into mourning.

Five women were among the six people killed by 40-year-old Joel Cauchi when he rampaged through Bondi Junction's busy Westfield shopping center on Saturday, turning the weekend fall afternoon into a scene of panic and terror.

Twelve others were injured in the rare attack, including a nine-month old baby whose mother was killed. Eight people remained in hospital Monday in conditions ranging from critical to stable with four discharged in the past 24 hours, according to New South Wales' Minister for Health Ryan Park.

The stabbing spree only ended when Cauchi was shot dead at the scene by an officer who single-handedly pursued him through the mall.

New South Wales Police Commissioner Karen Webb told ABC Breakfast News Monday that while police do not yet know the attacker's motivation, the fact he appeared to target women is "certainly a line of enquiry for us."

"The videos (of the attack) speak for themselves don't they," Webb said. "It's obvious to me, it's obvious to the detectives that that seems to be an area of interest, that the offender had focused on women and avoided the men."



Police are seen entering Westfield Bondi Junction on April 13, 2024 in Bondi Junction, Australia. Lisa Maree Williams/Getty Images

Authorities warned the investigation could take weeks and police will continue to interview witnesses and follow different lines of enquiry.

Police had earlier said Cauchi, from the neighboring state of Queensland, was known to authorities and had "suffered from mental health [issues]" though he had not been prosecuted or charged with any previous criminal offense in the state.

The state's Premier Chris Minns declared Monday a national day of mourning and said Australian national flags will be flown at half-mast on government buildings. Sydney's Opera House will be lit up in black ribbon to commemorate those killed in the attack.

"Families are in mourning today, lives have been devastated as a result of these criminal actions," Minns said. "The people who were killed were... innocent people who had their entire lives ahead of them. The community is devastated in the knowledge of their loss."

Police said Monday they had concluded their examinations of the shopping mall and the crime scene was being handed back to Westfield. More than 100 pieces of evidence were removed and will be forensically examined as part of the investigation, said Yasmin Catley, New South Wales Minister for Police.



A woman cries as she comes out of the Westfield Bondi Junction shopping mall after a stabbing incident in Sydney on April 13, 2024. David Gray/AFP/Getty Images

Baby stabbed in attack 'doing well'

More details are emerging about the six people killed in Saturday's attack, including a mother whose baby was also stabbed, a Chinese student, and a security guard who was on his first day keeping watch at the mall that was struck.

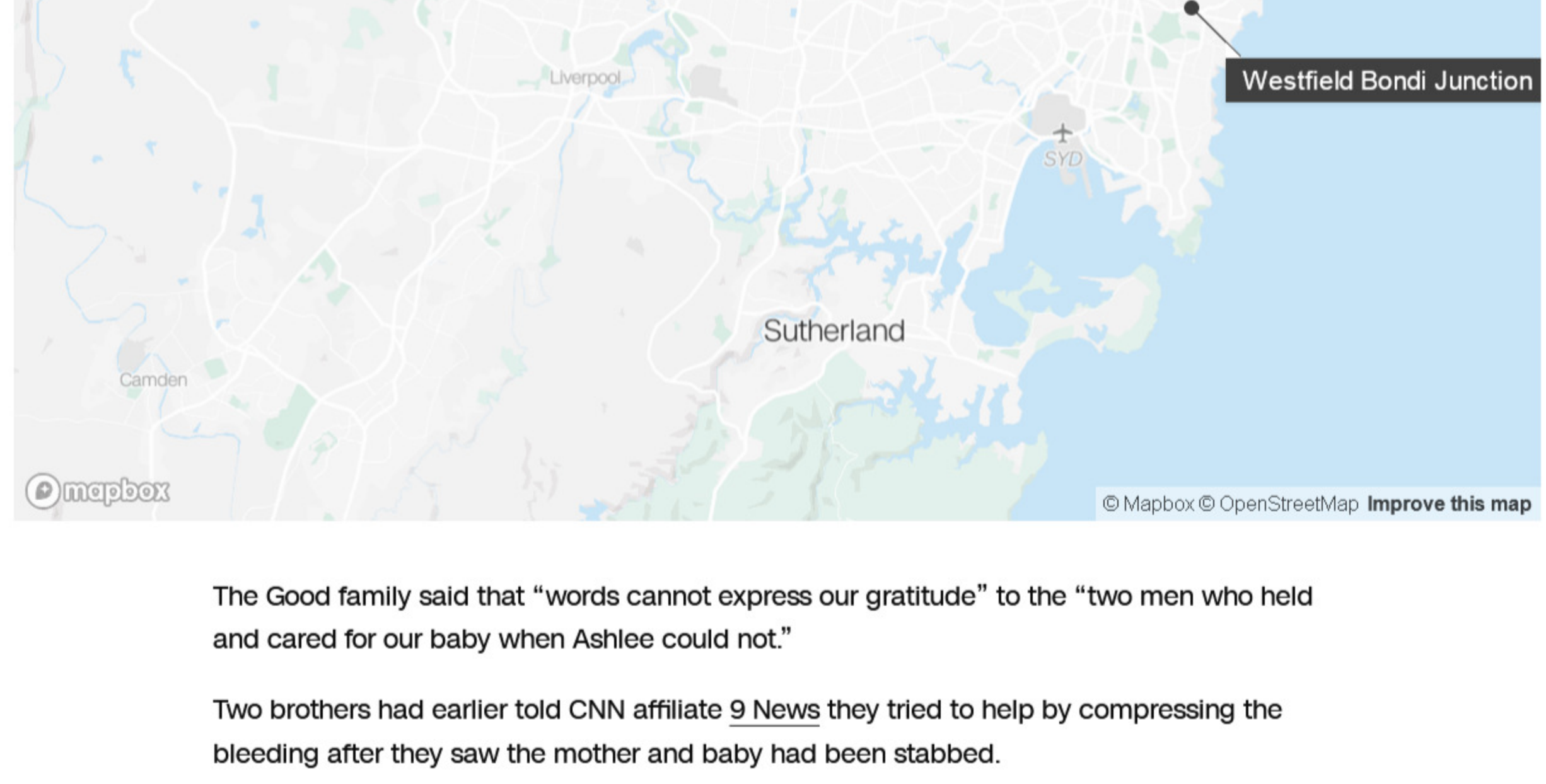
Among the victims is Ashlee Good, 38, who was described by her family in a statement as "a beautiful mother, daughter, sister, partner, friend, all round outstanding human and so much more."

Good was rushed to hospital in critical condition but later died from her injuries. Her nine-month-old daughter was also stabbed in the attack and received emergency surgery overnight.

"We can report that after hours of surgery yesterday our baby is currently doing well," the family said in the statement.

Minister for Health Park said the whole country had been "holding its breath" for news of the baby's condition. He said she had moved from critical to serious, which was "a significant improvement" and doctors hoped to move the baby onto a ward in the coming days.

"In the darkest of times comes sometimes the brightest of lights," he said. "Staff have literally performed miracles and people are alive because of their efforts."



The Good family said that "words cannot express our gratitude" to the "two men who held and cared for our baby when Ashlee could not."

Two brothers had earlier told CNN affiliate 9 News they tried to help by compressing the bleeding after they saw the mother and baby had been stabbed.

"We were holding the baby and trying to compress the baby," one said.

Faraz Tahir, 30, was also identified as among those killed. He was described in a statement from the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of Australia as an "integral member of our community, known for his unwavering dedication and kindness."

Tahir was on duty as a security guard at the mall at the time of the attack, the statement said, and is the only male victim.

It was his first day on the job in that location, his friend Adnan Qadir told CNN affiliate 7 News.

"He was really excited. He had a lot of ambition for his future, just settling into his new country... He was looking forward to a stable career to make a family up here. And it's just sad how it all ended up."

The community said Tahir was a refugee who had fled persecution in his home country of Pakistan and sought refuge in Australia a year ago.

Pikria Darchia, 55, Dawn Singleton, 25, and Jade Young, 47 — an architect and mother of two — were also killed in the attack, according to CNN affiliate 9 News.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese told KISS 1065 radio on Monday that the sixth victim was identified as Yixuan Cheng, a Chinese national who was studying in Australia.

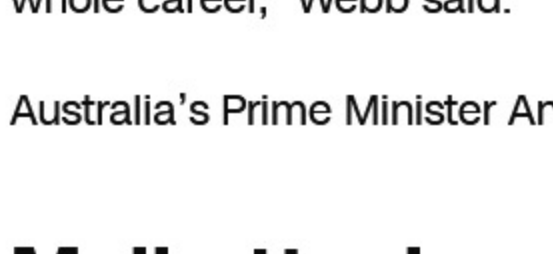
The Chinese Embassy in Australia confirmed that one Chinese national had died and another was seriously injured in the attack.

Donations for those killed have begun **pouring in** from members of the public on online fundraisers set up to help the victims' families.

Officer praised as a 'hero'

Meanwhile, the officer who shot the mall attacker has been praised as a hero for her actions, which authorities said undoubtedly saved more lives.

Senior police inspector Amy Scott arrived on the scene first and was alone when she engaged the attacker. She shot him when he lunged at her with a knife, police said.



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Video on local media showed Scott administering CPR on the attacker after he was shot.

Scott is a highly trained officer who "did what she was trained to do... We are very grateful to her," said Yasmin Catley, New South Wales Minister for Police.

Police Commissioner Webb told ABC news that Scott was "doing ok" and "spending some time with her family."

"She's an experienced officer. I've known Amy for many years, she's been operational her whole career," Webb said.

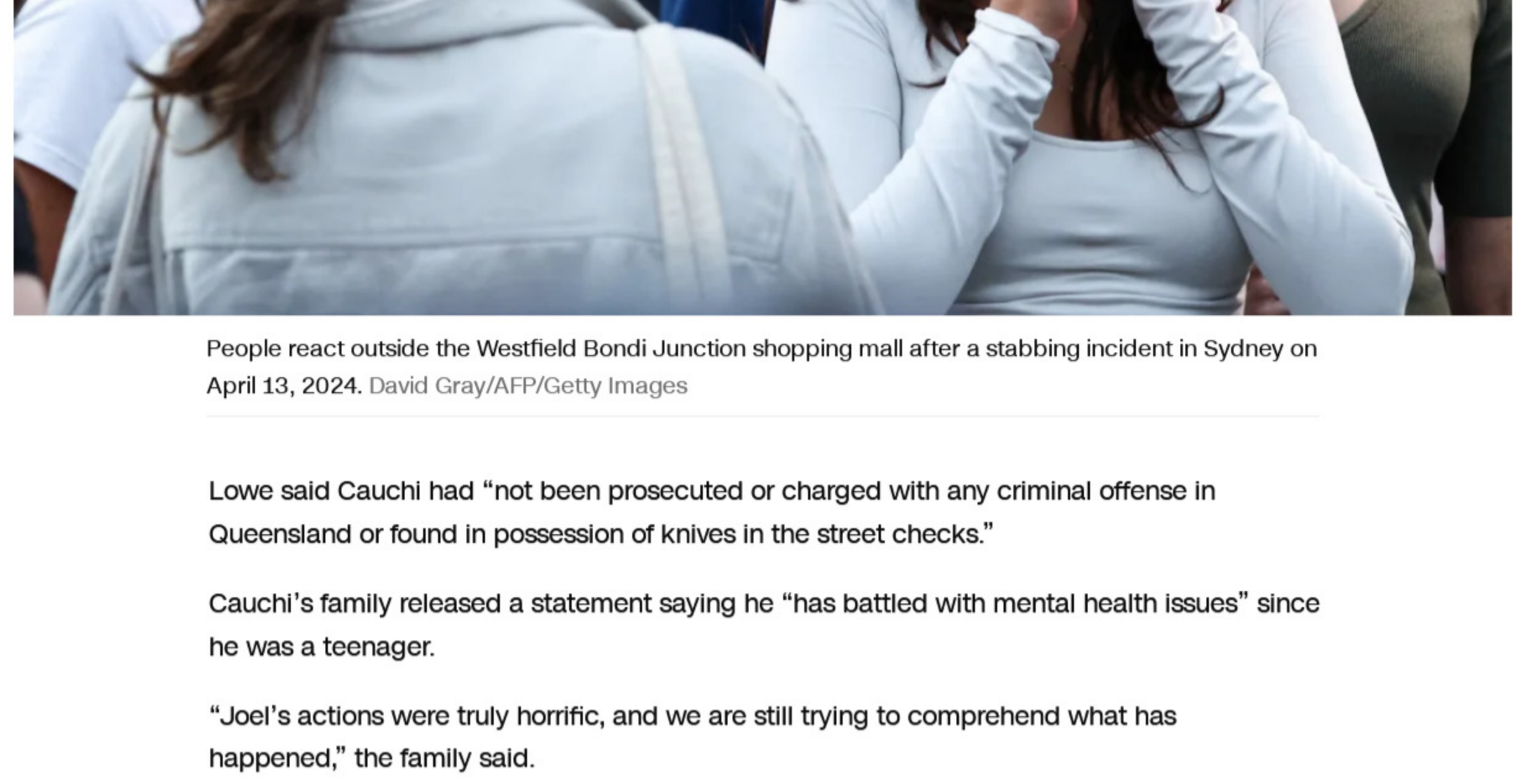
Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese called Scott a hero who "no doubt saved lives."

Mall attacker was known to authorities, slept rough

Authorities described the mall attacker Cauchi as an "itinerant" who had moved from place to place over the past few years, often sleeping rough or in his vehicle.

The last interaction Queensland Police had with him was in December 2023, when he was "street checked," Queensland Police Assistant Commissioner Roger Lowe said Sunday.

"We believe he has been sleeping in a vehicle or out of backpacks... His family don't have regular contact with their son," he said.



People react outside the Westfield Bondi Junction shopping mall after a stabbing incident in Sydney on April 13, 2024. David Gray/AFP/Getty Images

Lowe said Cauchi had "not been prosecuted or charged with any criminal offense in Queensland or found in possession of knives in the street checks."

Cauchi's family released a statement saying he "has battled with mental health issues" since he was a teenager.

"Joel's actions were truly horrific, and we are still trying to comprehend what has happened," the family said.

"We are in contact with both the New South Wales Police Force and Queensland Police Service and have no issues with the Police Officer who shot our son as she was only doing her job to protect others, and we hope she is coping alright," the statement said.

Andrew Cauchi, the father of Joel Cauchi, told CNN affiliate 9 News that he was "heartbroken" for the families of the victims.

"I'm extremely sorry. I'm heartbroken for you. Look, this is so horrendous, that I can't even explain it," he said. "To you he's a monster. To me, he was a very sick boy. He was a very sick boy."

Public enquiry

An 18 million Australian dollar (\$11.6 million) independent public inquiry has been launched to look at the police response and criminal investigation into the attack, as well as the attacker's interactions with the state government and health agencies, New South Wales Premier Minns said Monday.

Mass casualty events are rare in Australia and gun ownership was strictly controlled following the 1996 Port Arthur mass shooting when a lone gunman killed 35 people.

However, many campaigners and criminologists say violence against women remains stubbornly prevalent and often overlooked.

The number of women killed by violence in Australia has ranged between 43 and 84 each year since Counting Dead Women began tallying deaths in 2012. Already in 2024, 24 women have died violently, the group said.

In the aftermath of Saturday's rampage, the government said it was also looking at potential changes to restrictions on security guards in major crowded centers such as shopping centers and hospitals.

Minns ruled out allowing security guards to carry stun guns or firearms though, and gave no further details.

"The government is not considering policy changes in relation to stun guns or firearms," he said. "We don't believe that more firearms in the community is a good decision, but we're looking at the current restrictions that are in place for equipment, for security guards, and the resulting training that would be required if there was to be a policy change."

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