



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

National Police Remembrance Day

SPEECH

Monday, 17 September 2012

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Date Monday, 17 September 2012
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Questioner
Speaker Jones, Ewen, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Mr EWEN JONES (Herbert) (13:16): I also rise to speak to the motion proposed by the member for Fowler on National Police Remembrance Day. We are a tolerant society and we are an understanding society. We are that way due to, in no small part, the work done in our communities by each state and territory police service. We saw, only over the weekend, how police officers were attacked by a bunch of thugs reacting to something which happened overseas and flouting the laws of this land in protest. That our police were there and held the line and did not retaliate in the way many people in this country may have wished speaks volumes about the integrity of the men and women who form our police services. It is a very dangerous job and one where the people, in taking on the career, were made very aware of the dangers. But they are fine with that, because they have the training and the equipment and the partners to deal with each moment. It is the families of police officers who are left to worry. It is the children of police officers, as we have just heard from the member for Petrie, and it is the children of our ADF personnel, who have, on too many occasions, been forced to go without a loving dad or mum.

In Townsville we have the North Queensland Police Academy, and I am pleased to hear that the LNP government of Queensland is producing more cops for the beats in Queensland. The Queensland Police Service takes the safety of its members very seriously and works towards the day when there will be no lives lost at all. That is the goal. My city has a very good relationship with the Queensland Police Service. In fact, the *Townsville Bulletin* awards a special copper every year with its *Townsville Bulletin* North Queensland Police Officer of the Year Award. This year it was won by Detective Sergeant Mark Hogenelst from Charters Towers. I only met him briefly to congratulate him, but he must be a super bloke and a great copper. He beat Senior Sergeant John Tantalo from Halifax Police Station and Brad Gough from Deeragun and Rollingstone police stations. I know Brad mainly by reputation. If he is not having his head shaved for a cure, he is running raffles at the Rollingstone pub, raising money for some community and, in particular, the Rollingstone and Mutarnee state schools. All this is done on his days off. He, like so many of our police men and women, has been in the service for a long time. Brad has over 30 years of service. The previous winner of this award was from Palm Island. So being a policeman is not just a big city job; it is a regional and rural job as well and they take their job all over the place.

We want our police to hold the values of our society at their core. We want our police to hold the attributes of integrity, fairness, equity, professionalism and confidence as a mirror to how we want our own communities to be viewed. Too often we hear of police officers being spat on and worse. To meet with the men and women of our police service is to meet mums and dads from our schools and our sporting and community clubs. But they have to go into places where we never have to venture. They have to deal with people who take, without thought of consequences.

I am an auctioneer by trade and I always say that auctions are you meet the best of people and the worst of people. In the police service you could probably say the same. They are the first in when there is any sort of trouble and we expect them to hold a higher account of themselves than others would. To retiring Queensland Police Commissioner Bob Atkinson I say thank you for a job well done. To his successor, Ian Stewart, I wish you well and I know that the welfare of your officers is at your call. So whether it is standing on the side of the road making sure that we are not killing each other on the highways, whether it is patrolling up and down Flinders Street East in the middle of the night making sure two drunks do not kill themselves as they go around punching walls, our police are out there to help us—and that should be remembered.

I pay tribute to the hardworking men and women of Queensland and Australia's police services. I look forward to 29 September when we can show our respects, in two weeks. I pay great respect to those people who have lost their lives while carrying out their duty. I extend my heartfelt condolences to the families who have lost someone in the line of duty.