



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**National Police Remembrance Day**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 20 October 2014**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Elliot, Justine, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** No  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Mrs ELLIOT** (Richmond) (12:04): I am very pleased to be speaking on this important motion. I commend the member for Macarthur for moving the motion, and note the contributions by previous members, all in support of our police services and recognising the National Police Remembrance Day.

I am pleased to speak on this for a number of reasons. Firstly, as a former police officer, I always like to take the opportunity to commend the work of our police services across the nation. My husband is also a former police officer.

I also want to take the opportunity to thank the local police in my electorate of Richmond—the Tweed-Byron Local Area Command—who do an incredible job, as we all know, under difficult circumstances. We have a growing area and a lot of very busy tourist spots. I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone from the Tweed-Byron Local Area Command.

As I said, I am a former police officer from Queensland, as is my husband. We were both in the Queensland Police Service. I was in general duties; he was in the traffic branch. It is a really important year for the Queensland Police Service because in 2014 they celebrate 150 years of policing in Queensland, so it is an opportunity to acknowledge that.

As we turn to National Police Remembrance Day each year, 29 September holds a very special significant for police right throughout Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and the Solomon Islands. It is a day for police to pause and honour officers whose lives have been lost whilst performing their duties. It is also a day for the general community to pause and thank those who serve in the police services.

National Police Remembrance Day was first held in September 1989 as a result of a joint decision at the 1988 Australasia and South West Pacific Region Commissioners' Conference. It was a great decision to have this day. We see a number of police monuments through various states, and our national police monument well. It is wonderful to have that in place. It is located here in Canberra and was completed in 2006, with the names of 719 fallen officers inscribed on a wall of brass touchstones. The touchstones include the officers' ranks, names, jurisdictions, and places and dates of death. It is very important to have that national monument in place. Fortunately, this year no Australian police officer has been killed on duty. I think it is important to acknowledge that.

In terms of the local commemorations, there was a very large event in my electorate. My electorate is on the border of Queensland and New South Wales and at Twin Towns they held a joint event with the Queensland Police Service and the New South Wales Police Service, as they do every year. I think it is fantastic to have such a large event that involves both states. The AFP were present, as were retired police. I am very pleased that my husband, Craig, was able to represent me at this combined service.

In fact, hundreds of police took part. They call it the Gold Coast-Tweed National Police Remembrance Day services. Officers from the border towns in both states marched and paraded through the streets to remember those 140 Queensland police officers and 252 police officers from New South Wales who have died on duty. They were all remembered in the very moving ceremony that many people attended. Of course, the thoughts of many of us are with the family of Detective Senior Constable Damian Leeding, who was killed after responding to an armed robbery and hostage situation on the Gold Coast in May 2011.

I would also like to touch on the great role that Legacy play—this is in the original motion as well—and to acknowledge that right throughout the country they do an outstanding job. The mission statement of New South Wales Police Legacy is:

That no widow, widower or child of deceased, serving, or former Police Officers will ever feel forgotten or in need.

The New South Wales organisation currently provides support for more than 1,300 police family members, caring for children as young as two, and some widows as old as 101. So that is a really remarkable achievement by Legacy. They also say on their website that their commitment is to build on the care and support of over 20,000 serving and retired police officers and their families during times of tragedy and need. They also say on their website:

Police Legacy:

Honours the history and proud traditions of the NSW Police Force, police and their families, in particular, those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Takes pride in providing compassionate, continuous and long term support to the people in our care.

Embraces the camaraderie and unique bond shared across the police family.

To conduct charitable business in a transparent and ethical manner in the best interest of those whose care we have been entrusted.

Legacy New South Wales provides an outstanding array of support, from education grants to providing funding and counselling. They do an outstanding job.

As I said, I was very pleased to be able to speak on this motion in relation to National Police Remembrance Day. It is an opportunity for all of us to remember the very difficult work that is involved with policing, and the sacrifices that have been made by so many as well. I would like to thank all of those police and their families, particularly of course those in my electorate and those in the Tweed-Byron Local Area Command but the police right throughout the country, and their families as well.