




Speech by

Annastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

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DEATH OF SOLDIER IN AFGHANISTAN, MOTION TO TAKE NOTE

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.37 am): I share the sentiments expressed by the Premier today. This morning we will hold one minute's silence as a mark of respect for a member of the Australian military who was killed while on active overseas service. Special Air Service Regiment Sergeant Blaine Diddams, aged 40, was killed in action in Afghanistan on 2 July after his patrol was dropped by helicopter in pursuit of an insurgent. Sergeant Diddams is the 33rd Australian to be killed in Afghanistan since Australian forces entered the country. The body of Sergeant Blaine Diddams was brought back to Perth yesterday afternoon and a ceremony was held at the Pearce RAAF base.

Sergeant Diddams is survived by his wife, Toni-Ann, their daughter, Elle-Lou, and their son, Henry; his parents, Peter and Cate; and siblings Nikki, Sian, Christian and Luke. Our hearts and thoughts go out to all of them today.

Sergeant Diddams, affectionately known as 'Didds', was described as a loving husband and devoted father. In a statement issued yesterday his family said, 'Didds passed away in a place very foreign to most of us, surrounded by his mates and doing what he truly loved.' They also said—

Friends and family were so very important to Didds. His mates really became members of our family. The men he stood side by side with in the SASR were his brothers in every sense of the word.

Like all active overseas service deaths, Sergeant Diddams' was a dreadful blow and today the Queensland parliament marks with respect the loss of this brave soldier and will honour his service and his sacrifice.