




Speech By
Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

ADJOURNMENT

Blain, Mr C; Poole, Mr G

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (7.00 pm): While for many people the Easter weekend is a time of celebration, it is also a difficult time for many families, some dealing with the aftermath of tragedies, often on our roads. In Far North Queensland it was a dark time for the families of two local police officers who lost their lives. In the time allotted to me today I wish to pay tribute to Constable Casey Blain and Constable Gene Poole, both role models in their communities.

Earlier this week the Minister for Police spoke of Mareeba based Casey Blain, who was killed on Friday, 29 March on his first day of relief duty near Georgetown. Casey was married to my cousin Lena, and upon hearing the tragic news my thoughts and those of my entire family turned to Lena and her four-year-old son, Mark.

Casey was liked by almost anyone who met him and was admired and respected for the way he conducted himself in all aspects of his life. I want to particularly express my sincerest condolences to Casey's parents, Ray and Lynette, who have lost their only son. In a recent newspaper article, Ray, a senior transport inspector with the department of transport, talked of only weeks ago sharing a quiet drink with his son after Casey had attended a fatal crash. He said—

We talked about the days that are good and the days that are not so good. And he talked about the new job he was getting and I told him how proud I was of him. Twenty-five years of my life has been on the other side looking at parents who've lost children and loved ones ... There's no gap like the one that you feel when it's your own.

The message that I heard over and over again was that Ray and Lynette should be so proud of the man they raised—a loving husband, a dedicated father and a pillar of the community. Serving with honour in both the Queensland Police Service and the Army Reserve, Casey was about to start his dream role as a school based police officer, something he would have excelled at. Casey will be remembered by all who knew him, but perhaps one of the biggest tragedies of all is that there are so many people who will now never get to know him, in particular those young people whose lives he would no doubt have changed for the better.

I also want to express my condolences to the family of Constable Gene Poole from Gordonvale station who suffered a medical condition and died in his home on Easter Saturday aged 41. Not one to seek promotion or the limelight, Gene was content to be the best local police officer he could be, and the Gordonvale community was the better for it. Gene graduated from the academy in 2001 and received a medal for 10 years distinguished service, eight years of which were spent at Gordonvale. Prior to this time he was stationed at Tully and also served on Palm Island and was awarded a bravery medal for service during the 2004 riots. My deepest sympathies go to Gene's partner, Kerry Sues—someone I have known almost my entire life—and their three young children, Harry, Lawson and Kamryn. The loss of Casey and Gene hit me hard—not because I was a close personal friend of either, but as a father of three children under four myself it broke my heart to think that their children may not truly know how well liked and respected their fathers were. It is our job—all of us—to ensure that they know and to remind them as often as possible. I know that both Casey's and Gene's fellow

officers are hurting too. Being a police officer is a tough job at the best of times but no doubt even harder when you lose a friend and colleague. I wish to thank the Queensland Police Service, the Queensland Police Union and Police Legacy for their work in not only farewelling two very much loved local officers but also for their care and support of their respective families.