




Speech By
Trevor Watts

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

Record of Proceedings, 24 August 2017

PETITIONS: MOTION TO TAKE NOTE

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (11.58 am): I rise to speak to the petition that was put together by Ben Davis at 4BC which has over 11,000 signatures. I certainly thank the petitioners for putting forward Senior Constable Brett Forte's name as a suggestion for naming the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing. As the minister mentioned, there is a process involved in naming this infrastructure. Within the community there have been several names put forward, but today I would like to speak to why I think the Brett Forte Way should be given serious consideration by the government as it goes through the process.

Brett Forte was a police officer who, on 29 May 2017, paid the ultimate price in the Lockyer Valley. He lost his life as the result of a tragic and callous act. He was pursuing a known dangerous and violent criminal who had been in the purview of police for a long time. When the tragedy occurred Brett Forte showed great courage and valour protecting his fellow officers, and I believe history will show that those officers owe him a great deal. I want to talk about what we as a community owe the police force generally.

Every day when thousands of police men and women put on the uniform they put a thin blue veneer around our very civil society. They deal with some of the hardest, most violent and dangerous criminals that we see in Queensland so that we can all enjoy the luxuries that Queensland offers and the lifestyle that Queensland presents. Families and communities in Queensland are much stronger for knowing that we have a solid police force that is willing to both serve and sacrifice in the protection of our community, and every single officer should be commended for that.

Picking one of their own, Senior Constable Brett Forte, to name such a significant piece of infrastructure that travels from the Lockyer Valley, where his life was so tragically taken, up into the northern suburbs of Toowoomba, where his family lived, would be a very fine way to ensure that not only will the people of Queensland respect and understand the sacrifice that he made that day but also generations into the future people will ask, 'Who was Senior Constable Brett Forte?' They will know from the stories that are told what happened.

Having this piece of infrastructure bear his name is something that should be very seriously considered by the community and I would think that as we go forward many members of the community will show their support as we go through the formal process. Ultimately, it shows a great deal of respect from our community to the police force—an organisation in itself that every day goes out and does the things that others of us in Queensland do not want to do so we can enjoy our lives in comfort and security. Every day their families face the fear that something could go wrong while they are out there protecting our community. To have one of their own acknowledged in such a way acknowledges all police in Queensland and would certainly show our appreciation and our pride in the quality, professionalism and self-sacrifice that our police force is willing to make.

I thank the petitioners and Ben Davis from 4BC for putting this on the agenda. I thank the minister for giving it serious consideration and I look forward to going through the process and ensuring that we get the name that the community really wants for this piece of infrastructure.