




Speech By
Hon. Leeanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

Record of Proceedings, 22 April 2020

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Robba, Mr Z

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts) (2.43 pm): It is with great sadness that I share with the House the passing of marine park ranger Zachery Robba, aged 23, who on the evening of 6 April was tragically killed in a shark attack near North West Island, east of Gladstone. The incident occurred after Zach had finished a long day's work on the island and was recuperating with colleagues, who returned to their support vessel. Despite a brave fight and the remarkable care and comfort of Zach's ranger colleagues and paramedics, Zach eventually succumbed to his injuries, after being transferred to Gladstone Hospital. I wish to pass on my deepest condolences to Zach's family and parents, Sheree and Peter, who laid their son to rest yesterday after losing him in such tragic circumstances and at such a young age.

Zach died pursuing his dream of being a park ranger. Like so many rangers in the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Zach had a passion for being in the outdoors and working to protect our beautiful natural environment and wildlife. Zach's drive and enthusiasm to be a ranger saw him volunteer and hold a number of positions in Moreton Bay before commencing as a marine parks ranger on the Great Barrier Reef. Working on the reef is a lifelong ambition for many in the conservation sector. That it was achieved so quickly in Zach's short career is a testament to his spirit and personal drive.

The QPWS is like a family. I know that many of Zach's colleagues were also his mates and are grieving. My thoughts are with them also at this time. I also want to express my deep gratitude to Zach's parents. In their own time of unimaginable grief, they have selflessly reached out and provided reassurance to Zach's colleagues by visiting them in Gladstone, Fort Lytton and Manly. In particular, Sheree and Peter travelled to Gladstone to meet Zach's fellow rangers who were on the vessel that returned to port following the tragic event. In doing so, they provided immeasurable comfort to the rangers who gave their utmost to try and save Zach's life. Such action speaks powerfully to the values that they so clearly instilled in Zach. I know the member for Lytton has been in contact with the family and has shared the condolences of the government with them during this difficult time.

The QPWS is filled with incredibly brave and remarkable people. In fact, even now there are rangers conducting planned burns on protected areas, preparing for the dangers of the next fire season. In places like the Cooloola Recreation Area, this week rangers are reducing fuel loads and protecting our communities. During the recent summer bushfires, QPWS staff stepped into harm's way to assist emergency services in battling blazes right across this state. Their bravery has been commended by those who saw it.

Rangers are a unique kind of public servant. Their role calls them to undertake a wide range of activities, some of them in the most remote and isolated parts of Queensland. The men and women at Carnarvon Gorge in Central Queensland, for example, work to protect the unique cultural and environmental values of the area, without any luxuries nearby. Rangers selflessly take up these posts

out of a genuine care for our lands and waters, and day after day they go about their work quietly without seeking praise or recognition. In my time as minister I have had the privilege of travelling throughout Queensland and meeting these hardworking rangers. I am continually amazed by the dedication and professionalism of each and every one of them. The work they do is invaluable to our environmental conservation efforts.

Rangers are brave, diligent and passionate about the environment. Zach Robba was all of these things and more. It is moments like this, when we lose one of our own, which reinforce the strong bond and support which exists throughout the QPWS. I want to pay tribute to all the managers and mates in QPWS who have supported the Robba family and each other through this most difficult of times. Zach's service to the QPWS will not be forgotten. Our thoughts and thanks will always be with the Robba family, whose loss has been so great.