




Speech By
Amy MacMahon

MEMBER FOR SOUTH BRISBANE

Record of Proceedings, 23 February 2023

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE: ARNOLD, MR M; DARE, MR A; MCCROW, MS R

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (12.11 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the condolence motion. 'As the sun surely sets: dawn will see it arise, for service, above self, demands its own prize.' 12 December 2022 will forever be etched in the memory of the Queensland Police Service. I wish I had pretty words to say and I wish that I had words that could provide comfort, but words are all we have in this place so in my contribution I will choose my words carefully. There have been a lot of words used to describe the events of the 12th of the 12th—an execution, an ambush, domestic terrorism—but I choose to remember the good that we saw in Queenslanders that day, specifically our Queenslanders in uniform and our everyday neighbours.

The blue family is grieving. It is a big family, and it is not just those who put on the blue uniform. We have a large number of civilians who assist us in the day-to-day job. The blue family extends to our immediate and extended family as well. It is not just 10,000, 12,000 or 15,000 people; it is a much bigger family. I recall exactly where I was that afternoon. Because the blue family is extended, I heard the news through the police network texts coming in on my phone. Much like everyone else, we are fighting for information. We need to know, because it could very easily have been a friend or a colleague.

For those of us who have worked in training, when we see recruits graduate and we send them off into the world we only hope that they will come out the other side and that we will see them and catch up with them on Police Remembrance Day, not that we will be calling out their name and lighting a candle for them on Police Remembrance Day. It touches everyone because 'there but for the grace of God go I'. That was a shift: two to 10. Get dressed, put the uniform on, go to work, sign out your gear, kit up and see what jobs are ready for the day. A missing person job, an inquiry—it is that simple. No-one goes to work thinking 'this is the day', but for a police officer that is an all-too-real possibility and, as we saw on the 12th of the 12th, it was all too real and tragic.

We have all attended that job, but almost all of us get to walk away. When two of our colleagues walk in and find themselves face to face with an evil and premeditated act, we can only feel helpless. What else could we have done? We will look and review and do our best to keep everyone safe, but in the face of an evil like they faced that day, I am afraid I have no words.

I thank the police officers from the local area who went out to recover their fallen brother and sister. I thank the police officers and specialist officers who travelled and then stayed throughout the night to make sure that incident was resolved. I thank every Queensland police officer who turned up for work the next day, because that is no easy thing to do. That is what police do: they take the burden, they shoulder it and they turn up to work. They stand shoulder to shoulder in their grief and they keep Queenslanders safe.

The next day I attended the police memorial across the road with my kids. I sat on the grass while my kids collected some flowers to put on the memorial. The police family is an extended family. I think we all must be cautious of the impact this has on the extended families of our police officers, because all too suddenly the job that their loved ones do is very real. I know that for my kids, having a serving

police officer father, it is a hard thing to grasp—to hear the news and see all of the coverage and to face the real possibility of what it means to be a serving police officer in Queensland. It is a difficult conversation to have, but we have to have it because we need our police—and they need us. To be able to turn up to work every day, they need our support. So I will turn up in this place every day, and I will be there every day for my kids, to make sure they have the support they need—that they know they are in a loving family and are part of the blue family.

What we do here in Queensland, as exemplified by Mr Alan Dare, is be there for each other when needed, whether that is at the beginning of the shift or at the end of the shift. Welcome them home, share their stories and enjoy the time you have. 'Rest in peace friend and colleague, for the sun has now set. We will remember. Hasten the dawn.'