




Speech By  
**Dale Last**

**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

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Record of Proceedings, 23 February 2023

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

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (11.30 am): I rise to contribute to this condolence motion. Mr Speaker, 12 December 2020 will be forever etched in Queensland's history as one of our darkest days. It was a day that shocked Queensland and it was a day that forever changed the Queensland Police Service. Constables Rachel McCrow and Matthew Arnold and a good Samaritan, Alan Dare, tragically lost their lives at Wieambilla on that day, and I am both humbled and proud to contribute to this condolence motion here today. I know that I speak on behalf of my parliamentary colleagues and both former police officers, the member for Lockyer and the member for Ninderry, in delivering my contribution here today.

When police officers are sworn in they take an oath that includes inter alia 'that I will cause His Majesty's peace to be kept and preserved; that I will prevent to the best of my power all offences against the same'. On that day that is exactly what Rachel and Matthew did. They upheld their oath and they gave up their lives for each and every Queenslanders.

In recent days I have spoken to some of Rachel and Matthew's former work colleagues, including Constable Matt Herbert, who shared their insights into what it was like to live and work with Rachel and Matthew. According to Matt, the QPS lost two of their best and brightest. They were not just work colleagues; they were mates, socialising together and making the most of living and working in Tara. He described Matt as a ladies' man. He was known as the fastest man in Dalby after winning a footrace wearing his RM Williams. They were both super keen and they were good at what they did. Rachel had a knowledge beyond her years. She loved her mum, but she loved her blue heeler Archie even more. Archie and Rachel spent all of their time together and he was very protective of her. Now living with Rachel's mum, he still to this day stands vigil waiting for her to come home. Her bubbly personality made her a friend to everyone, and her goals and aspirations for higher rank were often the cause of many jokes amongst her colleagues, with some even joking that she was destined to become a commissioner down the track. Matt was studious, he was a larrikin, but he was very, very close to his family. He loved his brand new Ford Ranger. He was out there cleaning and polishing it every day, and he loved the lifestyle and general duties he performed in that community.

The third Queenslanders we lost that day was a man who always showed up. Alan Dare's best mate Max told the *Brisbane Times* that Alan had earned the nickname 'Rambo' because, like the Hollywood hero, he was always there when someone needed a hand. When Alan was laid to rest, accompanied by the biggest showing of classic Fords in Ipswich for 20 years, people who had never met Alan held up signs calling him a hero, and they were right. It was the words of Alan's daughter that best described Alan: he was a giant; a big man who did the little things, the things that really matter; the sympathetic ear; the helping hand; the heart of gold; the voice of reason; steady as a rock, he was always there. They show up. On 12 December Alan Dare did show up. Today we remember his courage and acknowledge a hero. He was the neighbour we would all like to have—someone willing to give a hand and, more importantly, someone you could rely on in times of need. Indeed, the Wieambilla community has lost a true friend and a hero.

As the shadow minister, I travelled to Tara and Chinchilla where I met Rachel and Matt's colleagues following the events of 12 December. I can tell you that the pain felt by Rachel and Matthew's police family was as keen as the pain felt by their family and friends outside of the Police Service. What we saw on that day were barbaric acts—that can never be understated—but we also saw bravery, comradeship and community members actively seeking to help their friends and neighbours. We saw courage and bravery by police officers and community members not just as the incident unfolded but also during the rescue of constables Randall Kirk and Keely Brough and well beyond as fellow officers grieved and came to terms with the events of that day.

Today, as a community and as members of this place we must commit to recognising that family members, friends and colleagues are still grieving. Coming to terms with the events of that day does not come with a time frame; it comes with the support and admiration of all Queenslanders. To Alan, Rachel and Matthew I say thank you. Your deeds will not be forgotten by Queenslanders and your courage will be remembered.

I would like to conclude with the *Police Ode*, which is recited at National Police Remembrance Day each year to extoll the virtues in verse and in appreciation of a deceased law officer's self-sacrifice and devotion to duty—

As the sun surely sets:  
Dawn will see it arise,  
For service, above self,  
Demands its own prize.  
You have fought the good fight:  
Life's race has been run,  
And peace, your reward,  
For eternity begun.  
And we that are left,  
Shall never forget,  
Rest in peace friend and colleague,  
For the sun has now set.  
We will remember.  
We will remember.  
Hasten the dawn.