



Chris Hayes MP – Private Members' Business
National Police Remembrance Day
30 August 2020

Mr HAYES (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (16:46): I move:

That this House:

(1) notes that National Police Remembrance Day will be observed on 27 September 2020;

(2) acknowledges the crucial role police officers across Australia play in our local communities and the tremendous risk and sacrifice that comes with their duty;

(3) honours the lives and memories of those police officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the course of their duty and specifically honours the tragic loss of four members of the Victorian Police Force, namely, Leading Senior Constable Lynette Rosemary Taylor, Senior Constable Kevin Neil King, Constable Glen Andrew Humphris and Constable Joshua Andrew Prestney, who tragically lost their lives in a multi-vehicle collision on Melbourne's Eastern Freeway;

(4) pays tribute to the families and friends of police officers who have been killed in the line of duty throughout our nation's history;

(5) commends the valuable work of Police Legacy, who look after the loved ones of police officers who have fallen; and

(6) reaffirms its support for the nation's police officers and honours their courage, commitment and dedication in ensuring the peace and safety of our communities.

I start with the words: 'I sat down and watched the news and thought: 'My cousin runs up and down there. Just a split second and everyone's life changes.' This is a statement from the cousin of one of the police officers who was tragically killed in the line of duty in Victoria. I've chosen this statement because I think it puts in perspective the inherent dangers of everyday policing and the significant personal toll that it can have on families of police officers.

National Police Remembrance Day will be observed on 27 September this year. It is one of the most significant days in the national police calendar. As a nation, we pause to remember the police officers who have lost their lives in the execution of their duty and to honour the courage, commitment and dedication of all police members who have sworn to protect their communities. Policing comes with a high degree of risk and danger that thankfully most of us will never have to face. It truly takes a special type of person with a special type of courage to wear the police uniform, and we are forever indebted to those fine men and women who choose to do so and recognise their commitment in ensuring the peace and safety of our communities, a duty of which they are sworn to uphold. Our safety and that of our families and the security of our homes, our businesses and, indeed, our democracy are all reliant on the enforcement of our laws—a task which primarily falls to our police.

This Police Remembrance Day, as we fight off the global coronavirus pandemic, I would like to take the opportunity to also recognise the multi-faceted role undertaken by our police officers who have been serving on the front line across the nation. They continue to put their lives at risk to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our communities during these most challenging times.

This year's service will see the total number of names of police officers listed on the National Police Memorial Wall regrettably rise again. This year we recognise the tragic loss of four members of the Victorian police force, namely Leading Senior Constable Lynette Taylor, Senior Constable Kevin King, Constable Glen Humphris and Constable Joshua Prestney. These four members of the Victoria Police tragically lost their lives in a multi-vehicle collision on Melbourne's Eastern Freeway when a truck ploughed into them as they were responding to a speeding incident on that highway. This incident clearly saddened Victoria and, indeed, the nation, with this being the single biggest loss of police life in Victoria's history.

I'd also like to take the opportunity to pay tribute to our police friends in New Zealand and the family of Constable Matthew Dennis Hunt of the New Zealand Police, who tragically lost his life in the line of duty earlier this year. It was a devastating incident in which I understand another police officer was also shot and a member of the public was injured as part of a routine police stop. The death of these police officers highlights the inherent danger involved in police work—not knowing what they are likely to face every time they commit to go on duty.

National Police Remembrance Day is also a time for us to reflect on the loved ones who have been left behind, the families and friends whose lives have forever been affected. While we mourn with them, we thank and honour all police families, whose unconditional support allows these fine men and women to serve our community. We owe it to the fallen to look after their families, which by the way is the work of Police Legacy, which is particularly important and deserving of our support. As a matter of fact, later this month there will be the police Wall to Wall Ride for Remembrance. It has been largely curtailed this year because of the pandemic. It is an opportunity for all police forces to come together with members to raise money for Police Legacy to look after the families of the fallen. To the four members of the Victorian police force who tragically lost their lives, to all police officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice and to all our past and current members of the police force, we honour you and we profoundly thank you for your service.