



Adrian Pederick MP
Member for Hammond

HANSARD

House of Assembly
Thursday, 26 September 2013, Page 7130

NATIONAL POLICE REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:09): I rise to support the motion by the member for Stuart that this house notes that 29 September 2013 is National Police Remembrance Day, that we pay tribute to the 61 members of the South Australian police force who have paid the ultimate sacrifice whilst performing their duties as police officers, and acknowledge the dangers facing the men and women who serve in our police force to provide us with a safer and more secure community.

With regard to local policing in regional areas, as a member who represents a regional area, the local police are very much a part of the community. That was demonstrated with some local forums recently. There was one in Murray Bridge where the local police had a forum and went through some of the issues that were being dealt with in the local community, and there were questions raised by the community. That interaction was well regarded and well received.

There was another forum held down the South Coast in the Goolwa end of my electorate and there was some concern about perceived crime rates. What we do know is that crime is not fussy about where it takes place. Some people might think they live in better places than others, but crime can happen anywhere. Certainly there was the perception that there were quite a few different activities of an illegal nature going on. There was a massive interest in the community for that forum. About 200 people attended and there were about eight or nine police in attendance from the Hills/Fleurieu section. They gave a very good overview and put up the statistics of what the real story was, and it was not as bad as what people thought.

It is interesting to note that it is not just the uniformed or local police who are out and about. You can have the breathalyser unit in the community or you can have the unmarked cars in the community and people do not even know they are there quietly policing our state. I think that interaction with the community is to be highly regarded, especially in country communities where the back-up can sometimes be many kilometres away if there are situations. In my electorate there are a lot of areas for police to cover. There is the Mallee region around Pinnaroo and Lameroo and, at the other end of the electorate, there are two police stations at Goolwa. That can either be backed up through Victor Harbor, Mount Barker or Strathalbyn. If there is a significant incident anywhere in that vicinity, back-up police have to come a significant distance.

In relation to community policing, I am talking about how police interact with the community. I must say that some local police do it better than others because they realise they have to live in the community. In recent times, I know the local police officer at Lameroo would go into the hotel, have a look at the people in the bar and say, 'Give me your car keys now and I'll take you home at closing time and, if you don't comply, well, you will get a visit as you leave.' Generally, they complied and they were delivered home, which I think is a great service. Instead of just laying down the heavy hand of the law, which could happen, she made sure that people do get home safely.

There are people who have long-held positions in regional police stations. The local police officer at Coonalpyn (Stan) has been there for many years. When you listen to the truck drivers on the CB radio, it is not, 'Look out for the cops, they're out in Coonalpyn,' it is, 'Stan is on the road.' This is a

true story: the interstate drivers know who the local police officer is in Coonalpyn. They will be on the CB and they will say, 'Stan is out,' or, 'Stan is not out,' or, 'Stan's car is out but Stan is not in it,' and stuff like this. It is interesting that that takes place. From what I understand, Stan is like most police officers, he is very fair-minded and does the right thing, but if he gets a bit of heat over the airwaves, or someone does the wrong thing in his policing area, he will enforce the appropriate action.

Talking about appropriate action, generally in policing—and we have seen it in recent times, where one police officer was shot and one was assaulted—when police knock on a door, and it could be as a result of a call about a domestic dispute or usually something of that nature, they are not sure what they are going to face. If all of a sudden through a screen door a gun goes off, who knows what is going to happen. We have seen some horrible injuries sustained by police in recent years from things like that happening, and they do not deserve that at all. Those people who commit those criminal activities, they deserve the book to be thrown at them, quite frankly.

So, you have to commend police officers who have the guts to do those jobs—to go to the door of homeowners and sort out these domestic issues but also in relation to keeping our streets and communities safe at night, whether it be here in Adelaide or out in the community. Who knows what police officers come up against.

Sadly, we have seen over the 175 or so years of the police force operating in this state these 61 deaths of people who have just been doing their job—doing their job of keeping the community safe, police the community. They just want to go home to their loved ones like everyone else. These 61 members of the police force were protecting the community and, sadly, they did not have the opportunity to go home.

I would like to think that this honour roll will not grow but, sadly, I think it will because crime has not suddenly disappeared and some people, for some strange reason, always think that they are above the law. They will always get caught out, and they will end up facing the very dire consequences they deserve if they do attack police officers and cause them fatal injuries in their line of duty. I commend our police force for all the work they do, but I also want to pay a special commendation to the 61 police officers who have paid the ultimate sacrifice.

- Ends-