

# Sally Elizabeth URQUHART

06/05/2020

## Sally Elizabeth URQUHART

AKA ?

Late of ?

Partner ( fiancée ) of Senior Constable Trad THORNTON ( Bamaga  
Police Stn )

Queensland Police Academy Squad # ? ? ?

Queensland Police Force

**Regd. # 4014432**

**Rank:** Commenced Training on 19 February 2001

Probationary Constable- appointed 4 September 2001

Constable – appointed ? ? ?

**Final Rank = Constable**

**Stations:** Metropolitan North Region – Hendra Police Stn ( 19  
Feb 2001 – 13 Oct 2002 ), Cairns Police Stn ( 14 Oct 2002 – 10  
March 2003 ), Aurukun Police Station ( 11 March 2003 – 21  
August 2003 ), Bamaga Police Stn ( 18 months ) – Death

**Service:** From 19 February 2001 to 7 May 2005 = 4 years  
Service

**Awards:** No Find on Australian Honours

Born: ? ? ?

Died on: 7 May 2005

Age: 28

Cause: Passenger – Downed Aerotropics flight from Bamaga to Cairns, Qld

Event location: rugged mountain terrain 11kms northwest of Lockhart River Aboriginal Commission, Qld

Event date: 7 May 2005

Funeral date: ? ? ?

Funeral location: ?

Funeral Parlour: ?

Buried at: ?

Memorial / Plaque / Monument located at: ?

Dedication date of Memorial / Plaque / Monument: ?

**SALLY IS mentioned** on the Police Wall of Remembrance

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**FURTHER INFORMATION IS NEEDED ABOUT THIS PERSON, THEIR LIFE, THEIR CAREER AND THEIR DEATH.**

PLEASE SEND PHOTOS AND INFORMATION TO Cal

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**May they forever Rest In Peace**

**<https://www.facebook.com/groups/AustralianPolice.com.au/>**

**<https://www.facebook.com/groups/QueenslandFallenPolice/>**

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**In Memory of Constable Sally  
Urquhart**





Sally Elizabeth

**URQUHART**

Constable

7 May 2005

Location: Column 3 – Left leg, Rear portion,  
Row 4



**Constable Sally Urquhart** and **Senior Constable Trad Thornton** on the northernmost point of the Australian Mainland.

Constable **Sally Urquhart** registered number 4014432 was a Queensland Police Officer from the 19th February 2001 until the 7th May 2005.

Constable Sally Urquhart was on-board an Aerotropics flight from Bamaga bound for Cairns when it crashed into dense rainforest and rugged mountain terrain 11kms northwest of

Lockhart River Aboriginal Commission, killing all fifteen occupants on the 7th May 2005. This tragic loss has affected the whole community in the Far North, in particular the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community of Bamaga and Injinoo.

Constable Sally Urquhart had been stationed at Bamaga Police station, with her fiancé Senior Constable Trad Thornton for the past 18 months.

Sally was the eldest of three children born to Shane and Elizabeth Urquhart. She grew up as the daughter of School teachers and subsequently lived throughout Queensland. Sally was a young lady born for success, she was school captain at both primary and high school; a model student.

In the words of her father, " She touched the hearts of everyone she met from childhood to present, in the many parts of Queensland where we have lived ".

After finishing school she went on to complete a double degree at the University of Queensland in Law and Science, winning the University prize for Family Law.

Whilst at uni, Sally shared accommodation with a police officer, **Plain Clothes Detective Peta Ross** and it was during this time that Sally set her sights on joining the Queensland Police.



Sally and her dog ' Prince '

After graduating from university, Sally commenced recruit training at the Queensland Police Academy at Oxley on the **19th February 2001** and graduated on the **4th September 2001**.

Her first posting was to the Metropolitan North Region where she was stationed at **Hendra**. Even at this early stage in her Career Sally was showing signs of great potential. Her service history indicates that she excelled in all aspects of general duties and worked well in a team environment.

It was here that she met her finance, **Senior Constable Trad Thornton**. Trad was working in the Public Safety Response Team, (**PSRT**), at the time.

Sally was posted to **Cairns Station** on the **14th October 2002**, where she performed general duties in Team 4. Her Supervisor / Team Leader identified early that Sally was an officer who was prepared to accept any responsibility or task and displayed a high work ethic. She was well suited to general duties policing and excelled at all aspects of her work.

Sally's professionalism and understanding towards all members of the public went beyond that of her duty as a Police

Officer. She was always willing to assist members of the community and was commended by the then Assistant Commissioner Allan Roberts for her efforts.

**Trad** was transferred to **Cairns** a short time later and after 4 months, the pair were identified as suitable officers to work in the Aboriginal community in the Cape York Peninsular and were transferred to **Aurukun Station** where they policed from the **11th March** until the **21st August 2003**.

**Aurukun** is a station that has recently increased from 4 to 7 staff, with a population of approximately 1200. Most of the work involves policing aboriginal community which in itself is a huge task, the sacrifices that officers make to go there are enormous, however the life experiences are priceless.

**Sally** excelled in her work and she was involved with all levels of the community. Sally's personality and demeanour ensured that she was readily accepted by the community. Sally had a presence about her that brought calm to situations that verged on mayhem and conflict. Whilst stationed at **Aurukun** her rapport with the community members was one of respect, trust and honesty.

These qualities and her dedication to duty ensured that The Queensland Police were respected, in a sometimes difficult environment. Sally's attitude to work and her diligent and tenacious nature ensured that she was going to achieve whatever she desired.

**Sergeant Andrew Clarkson** ( current Officer in charge of Aurukun ) remembers **Sally** dealing with confronting and daunting situations that required great courage and composure. He remarks that **Sally** excelled in these situations, and it was reassuring to know that she was with you.

**Sgt CLARKSON** remembers her personality, her smile and her innate ability to say the right words at any given time making the rigors of policing Aurukun enjoyable. " I will always

remember the day that I was promoted to Officer in Charge, Aurukun not for the promotion, but for the way that Sally rushed over to me when she heard the news, gave me a hug and a kiss and then made a fuss over it all ”.

Sally was a selfless person who ensured that others would always come first. She was a dedicated police officer who values ensured that justice was served. When I heard of the tragedy, I pondered as to why could one who's light shines so strong and bright be taken from us.



Local kids at Aurukun swimming pool

Policing within any Cape Community within the Far Northern Region is a daunting experience for police officers to say the least. Officers within these communities develop the ability to foresee behavioural changes within the community. Officers are exposed to a myriad of situations and events that test their abilities. To be tenacious, resourceful and professional at all times is sometimes a feat within itself.

Since the implementation of Alcohol Management Plans (AMP's) communities have undergone a dramatic metamorphosis. With the lifting of the 'veil' of alcohol, policing within the communities has changed tact from the much talked about reactive policing style to a more proactive community based approach. This change has been embraced by the community and supported by both elders and councils.

Policing for female officers is compounded further by local

culture and tradition. Male's in these communities are reluctant to deal with female officers. From my observations all the females that I have worked with at Aurukun have been able to establish a rapport and gain respect within the communities, that some male officers have failed to achieve. These officers have utilised their various skills and instincts to finesse and diffuse potentially volatile situations.

The ability to arbitrate, negotiate and resolve situations are attributes that police utilise everyday. Working within remote and isolate communities ensures that these skills are honed and developed to their absolute potential. The ability to endear oneself to a community and make a difference was never more evident, with the tragic loss of Sally. Elders and councillors from the community stopped me to talk to me about Sally and how ' good a person she was '. **Silas Wolmby** an elder and traditional landholder of Aurukun stated to me that " she made him smile, and he knew that she would always do the right thing. "

From Aurukun she was transferred to Bamaga Police station. This area consists of 5 police. Sally was one of two female officers in Bamaga. The second being **Senior Constable Joanne Bailey**, the following comments are from **Jo**.

Sally was nothing more than a champion. She would undertake any task with such enthusiasm, whether it be major criminal investigations such as rape and indecent dealings to minor jobs that are required to efficiently run a small station. Sally was instrumental in organising court days and her organisational and leadership skills were way above her policing years.

Besides her policing skills, **Sally** had an amazing quality of ' brightening up the room '. She was always genuinely happy to see you at any time and nothing was a bother. Her laughter could be heard across the houses, which would straight away

make you smile.

**Trad** and **Sally** made many friends in Bamaga. Since they were **engaged** in **June 2004**, she shared her excitement with her closest friends. Her wedding plans were all sorted out, again she was organised down to the jelly beans on the table!

But it was not to be, and like many people from the Far North the **7th May 2005** will remain as the worst day they have ever experienced. But things are getting easier, and as a good friend of ours said recently, we are truly more blessed to have known Sally, even if it was only for a short time. She is sadly missed.



Sally's graduation day – pictured with squad mates Constable Krissie Warriner and Constable Mardi Watts



Sally on Patrol in Bamaga

## The Journal for Women and Policing

Pages 12 – 14

<https://acwap.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Issue16.pdf>

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### **Fresh blow to air crash victims' families**

by Vanessa Marsh and Vanda Carson

**18th Sep 2018** 9:15 AM

THE owners and operators of a commercial plane involved in one of Australia's worst air disasters have launched legal action that could stop the victims' families ever getting answers.

Two pilots and 13 passengers were killed in the **May 2005 Lockhart River tragedy** when an Aerotropics commercial flight crashed into a ridge line and exploded in flames, killing all on board during a flight from Bamaga.

In the latest roadblock for victims' families, owners of the doomed aircraft have launched an appeal in a bid to block a wrongful-death lawsuit in the US state of Missouri, just weeks after the victims' families won a legal battle to allow the

case to go to trial in July next year.

Brisbane man **Shane Urquhart** lost his **policewoman daughter Sally** in the crash and said the long-running legal hurdles were “frustrating” and “ludicrous”.

“We’re talking about human lives here, ordinary people and they were all good people going about their daily business,” he said.

“There’s no such thing as closure, there’s no closure when you lose someone but there may be justice but that certainly hasn’t happened here.”

The horror crash was the worst air disasters in Queensland in more than four decades and claimed the lives of a leading scientist, a popular policewoman, three key members of a football team, and a 25-year-old mother of six.

The families allege in the Missouri court action that the aircraft had several defects and that the crash was “the direct and proximate result” of one of more of those defects.

The alleged defects include claims the plane did not contain an effective ground proximity warning system, it was not equipped with autopilot and flight instruments were either hard to read, confusing, or not in proper view.

Lawyers for the plane’s owners and operators who are being sued by 61 family members of the crash victims, the majority of whom live in Queensland, launched an appeal on September 6 against last months’ Brisbane Supreme Court ruling allowing the Missouri case to go ahead.

The appeal argues the Supreme Court ought to rule that the Missouri action is “vexatious and oppressive” and that “nothing relevant” could be gained in the overseas action over and above what could be gained in Australia.

The families are pursuing legal action in Missouri where they

claim the aircraft was delivered, inspected and placed into operation.

The 61 family members are expected to fly to Missouri to give evidence or testify via video link.

In Missouri, a jury will determine the amount of damages awarded instead of a judge and there are no orders for costs as there are in Australia.

However it's not yet clear whether the US case will run according to Queensland or Missouri law.

Toowoomba lawyer Pat Nunan has been representing the victims' families for more than a decade and said the delays were difficult.

"It's terrible and it's had a great impact on the families of the victims," he said.

"Litigation is one of the great stressors of all time and it has been horrendous for them."

He said the families were desperate for answers.

"We're trying to get their day in court to determine what actually did go wrong and make sure it doesn't happen again," he said.

"It's like a hot dagger into a wound every time something comes up in these cases."

Brisbane man **Shane Urquhart** lost his **policewoman daughter Sally** in the crash and said the long-running legal hurdles were "frustrating" and "ludicrous".

"We're talking about human lives here, ordinary people and they were all good people going about their daily business," he said.

"There's no such thing as closure, there's no closure when you

lose someone but there may be justice but that certainly hasn't happened here."

The appeal returns to the Court of Appeal tomorrow.

Fresh blow to air crash victims' families | Morning Bulletin

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Daily **Mail**

## **'I'll never forget the words': Father reveals the chilling phone call he received moments after plane crash which killed his daughter and 14 others on board in mysterious circumstances**

Sahar Mourad

**4/10/2018**

A father has revealed the chilling phone call he received moments after the horror plane crash which killed his daughter and 14 others on board.

The crash, considered one of Australia's worst aviation disasters, led to the deaths of 15 people in 2005 after a plane struck a ridge in the Lockhart River, Queensland.

Grieving families of the passengers are still asking for answers after a Coroner's Inquest and Senate inquiry failed to conclusively reveal what caused the crash.

Constable Shane Urquhart, whose daughter Sally was one of the

passengers on the plane, has revealed the haunting words he heard immediately after the crash.

'The phone rang and when I answered, it was Sally's fiance Trad and I'll never forget the words...He just very, very quietly said "Shane, Sally's plane is missing",' he told A Current Affair.

Since the devastating incident, loved ones have been looking for answers to what happened on the plane which caused it to crash.

Mr Urquhart said there's 'no such thing as closure' and all the families' victims deserve answers.

'They don't deserve or didn't deserve what happened to them.'

The policewoman was due to marry Trad four months after the incident, but instead her fiancée and family were left with the heartbreaking task of burying her.

An inquiry into the crash found 19 different factors led to the fatal collision, with the main one being pilot error.

But Mr Urquhart does not accept this, saying the inquest took the easy decision to blame someone who is not around to defend themselves.

'In aviation accidents where everybody has not survived, who are they going to blame? The pilots, because no-one is available to tell the story and it's very, very easy to do that,' he told the network.

The victims' families lawyer Patrick Noona alleged there was something already wrong with the aircraft, revealing they would be taking legal action against the plane's owners in the United States.

The insurers are fighting to stop the legal proceedings but nothing will occur until the case appears in the Brisbane

Supreme Court next month.

If the families win then a wrongful death lawsuit will be heard in Missouri next year.

Mr Urquhart said his daughter would be cheering on the families saying, 'don't let the bastards win'.

<https://www.msn.com/en-au/news/australia/ill-never-forget-the-words-father-reveals-the-chilling-phone-call-he-received-moments-after-plane-crash-which-killed-his-daughter-and-14-others-on-board-in-mysterious-circumstances/ar-BBNVHOV?fullscreen=true#image=4>

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## Lockhart River air disaster

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **Lockhart River air disaster** occurred on 7 May 2005, when **Aero-Tropics Air Services Flight 675** crashed while on approach to land at Lockhart River Airport in Queensland, Australia, on a ridge known as South Pap 6 nautical miles (11 km) north-west of the airport.<sup>[2]</sup> All fifteen on board died as the aircraft was completely destroyed by impact forces and subsequent fire. The Fairchild Swearingen Metroliner commuter aircraft, registered VH-TFU,<sup>[3]</sup> was owned by Transair Ltd and operated by Aero-Tropics. The flight was scheduled from Bamaga on Cape York to


the regional centre of Cairns, with a stopover in Lockhart River. It was the worst air crash in Australia in 36 years since MacRobertson Miller Airlines Flight 1750 on 31 December 1968.<sup>[4]</sup>

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## Investigation

	<p>This section <b>does not cite any sources</b>. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed.</p> <p><i>Find sources: “Lockhart River air disaster” – news · newspapers · books · scholar · JSTOR (August 2016) (Learn how and when to remove this template message)</i></p>
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The **Queensland Coroner’s Inquest in 2007**, found that, despite evidence that there were a number of issues leading up to the crash, pilot error was the prime cause. Families of those who lost their lives in the disaster have been highly critical of the Coroner’s findings and the deficiencies in the operations of the regulator, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), and the poor company structure and practices of Transair Ltd.

The investigation was aided by flight information from the aircraft’s flight data recorder. As the cockpit voice recorder was unserviceable, and had been for some time, the

conversations occurring between the flight crew will never be known.

## Senate inquiry

As a result of intense lobbying by the father of one of the victims, **Constable Sally Urquhart**, and others, the Australian Senate's Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee resolved to conduct an inquiry into the Civil Aviation Safety Authority, its operations and other matters. The Inquiry was convened on 2–3 July 2008 at Parliament House, Canberra. As well as Mr Shane Urquhart's submission, there were sixty others which were considered by the Inquiry. The vast majority of the submissions were highly critical of most aspects of CASA's operations.<sup>[who?]</sup> Several people and organisations, including Mr Urquhart, supported their submissions in person at the Inquiry. In September 2008, the Committee Chair, Senator Glenn Sterle, released the report of the inquiry to the Transport Minister Mr Anthony Albanese and the public.

The recommendations from the report are:

1. That the Australian Government strengthens CASA's governance framework and administrative capability by:

- a. introducing a small board of up to five members to provide enhanced oversight and strategic direction for CASA; and

- b. undertaking a review of CASA's funding arrangements to ensure CASA is equipped to deal with new regulatory challenges.

2. In accordance with the findings of the Hawke Taskforce, that CASA's Regulatory Reform Program be brought to a conclusion as quickly as possible to provide certainty to industry and to ensure CASA and industry are ready to address future safety challenges.

3. That the Australian National Audit Office audit CASA's implementation and administration of its Safety Management Systems approach.

## Further incidents

Following the Lockhart River crash, Transair in Australia went into liquidation in late 2006.<sup>[5]</sup> Aerotropics also no longer operates because the Civil Aviation Safety Authority cancelled its Air Operator Certificate due to ongoing safety breaches. Transair continued to operate its PNG business until 31 August 2010 when the company's Cessna Citation ran off the runway on landing at Misima Island near Milne Bay, Papua New Guinea. The previous owner of Transair in Australia, Les Wright, died along with three others in the ensuing inferno. There was one survivor.

## Notes

- Accident history for {{{1}}} at Aviation Safety Network
- *"Aviation Occurrence Report 200501977 Final"*. Australian Transport Safety Bureau. 4 April 2007. Retrieved 14 January 2014.
- *"CASA Aircraft Register (VH-TFU)"*. Civil Aviation Safety Authority.
- Ten Worst Air Crashes in Australia since 1968. Retrieved 2011-09-11

1. Hans Mick (17 August 2007). *"Lockhart River plane crash findings handed down"*. Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Retrieved 14 January 2014.

# References

- Sydney Morning Herald
- Finding of Inquest: Inquest into the Aircraft Crash at Lockhart River. Office of the State Coroner 17 August 2007 Brisbane, Queensland
- Senate Committee Report: Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport. "Administration of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and related matters" September 2008

Lockhart River air disaster – Wikipedia

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## Respect Aussie Police & Emergency Services

May 8, 2016 · 🌐

Remembrance post Constable Sally Urquhart

10 years on we remember those lost in the Lockhart River Plane Crash

May 7, 2005, saw 13 passengers and 2 crew board an Aerotropics flight in Bamaga bound for Cairns.

Constable Sally Urquhart was one of those passengers heading to Townsville Police Academy for work and farewelled her fiancé at the Bamaga Airport.

Whilst enroute, their Metroliner crashed on 'South Pap' on the Iron Range about 11km from Lockhart River airstrip at about 11.44am.

Police commenced Operation Delta Devlin with Inspector Russell

Rhodes as the Forward Commander for the Crash Investigation and recovery.

Inspector Rhodes is now in his 4th decade of policing and he cited this job as his most demanding job as a Forward Commander as it was an extremely demanding search and recovery effort over a seven day period.

Whilst he had a very good team working with him, they were challenged by the tough terrain and weather conditions.

He said, "I do stress that it was never about us and no matter how hard it was going to be we were always going to do whatever it took to help those families."

No one can prepare you for a sudden loss of a loved one. When it comes in tragic circumstances, it's like a bolt from the blue that makes no sense at all.

Many of us in the QPS had the pleasure of working with Constable Sally Urquhart and treasure the time we had with her. She was an absolutely delightful young woman.

Beautiful inside and out, charismatic in nature, she was a little pocket rocket, smart as a whip, a dedicated police officer with so much potential to succeed. She was your typical girl next door and engaged to be married to a fellow officer later in 2005. Both were so excited to spend their lives together.

Constable Sally Urquhart was a much loved friend and colleague to many of us in the Queensland Police Service. Sal made our lives that much richer for just knowing her and she will always be remembered as a beautiful young woman, full of life and forever young.

Today ceremonies were held in Bamaga at the Airport and the Oxley Police Academy to mark the 10th anniversary of the plane crash.

Constable Sally Urquhart's family were present at the Police Academy to hear the Commissioner of Police Ian Stewart and Mr John O'Gorman (Retired Police Inspector) pay tribute to Sally, honouring her service, at the 10th anniversary of her death. In recognition of the shared tragedy of the plane crash, Sally's nieces and nephews released 15 balloons for each of those who lost their lives 10 years ago at the Oxley Academy ceremony.

Our deepest sympathies go out to all the families and friends of those lost in the Lockhart River Plane crash 10 years ago.

They remain alive in our hearts and treasured memories will not be forgotten.

RIP Sally

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## Honouring victims of shocking fatal flight

**CHRISTIE ANDERSON**, Townsville Bulletin

**May 7, 2015 8:21am**

A DECADE ago today, two pilots and 13 passengers boarded an aeroplane in Bamaga bound for Cairns – but they would never complete the fateful journey.

Memorial services will be held around the state today to remember the 15 people killed in the Lockhart River air disaster 10 years ago.

On May 7, 2005, an Aerotropics flight with 15 people on board from Bamaga to Cairns crashed into **South Pap Ridge**, 11km northwest of the **Lockhart River Aboriginal commission**.

**Trad Thornton** will be one of dozens of family members remembering a loved one taken too soon.

**Mr Thornton**, now a **police sergeant based in Brisbane**, was a senior constable in 2005 when his **fiancée Sally Urquhart** was killed in one of the worst aeroplane crashes in Australia's history.

**Constable Urquhart**, a 28-year-old police officer, based in **Bamaga** and celebrated for her strong sense of social justice, was on her way to **Townsville for a constable development course** when she died.

**Sgt Thornton** will attend a memorial service at **Oxley Police Academy for Constable Urquhart**, who was killed only weeks before she was due to marry the fellow officer.

"She was an absolutely amazing person and an exceptional police officer," he said.

"It's just one of those days that I suppose is going to be etched in my mind for the rest of my life like the day we were going to get married and the day we got engaged.



Sally Urquhart and fiancée Trad Thornton. Sally Urquhart died when the TransAir passenger plane smashed into a hill in May 2005 on approach to the Far Northern community of Lockhart River, killing all 15 people aboard.

“I’m very happy that she will be remembered but it is my opinion you don’t ever get over something like this but you learn to live with it.”

He said Constable Urquhart was such an exceptional police officer that after only three years in the service she had the Chief Superintendent and Assistant Commissioner travel more than 1000km to talk to her about her career progression.

“It was very impressive to see two high-ranking police fly 1000km to talk to someone about their police career,” he said. “She was very well educated with law and science degrees and she was very capable.

“She had the perfect personality to be a police officer.” Sgt Thornton now has a family and two young boys but he said he would never fully recover from losing his fiancée.

“In my mind I am able to separate the emotion from the plane crash and talk about the investigation but when it comes to Sally it’s a closed book,” he said.

“I see things and try and do things I think Sally would want me to do.

“Instead of wasting a day grieving and dwelling on the past I’m going to try and think about the good times.”

Father, Shane Urquhart said he would never fully recover from the tragedy.

“We live with it every day still, 10 years on – it’s always there,” he said. “There’s no such thing as closure.

“The memorial is about remembering Sally and thinking of the 14 other innocent people who were just going about their lives.”

[.au/news/honouring-victims-of-shocking-fatal-flight/news-story/7ac2cd090f61f20854e8520b89d20960](http://www.abc.net.au/news/honouring-victims-of-shocking-fatal-flight/news-story/7ac2cd090f61f20854e8520b89d20960)

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## A Call From Lockhart River

**Monday 2 March 2009 1:00am**

This program tells the poignant story of a popular young police officer widely described as one of the ‘best and brightest’ in the Queensland Force.

Sally Urquhart was one of 15 people killed four years ago when a plane crashed at Lockhart River in a remote region of Far North Queensland.

It was categorised as the worst airline disaster in Australia for nearly forty years.

At the time of her death Sally Urquhart was engaged to a police colleague also serving in the Far North. In a call to her mother just before the flight, Sally talked about the upcoming wedding and described her fear of getting on the plane. “I just hate it... it rattles” she said.

Sally’s father Shane is a primary school principal, with no expertise of any kind in aviation.

But when official investigations into the crash left questions

unanswered, he set out on a single minded mission that took him to the most powerful forums in the land – with consequences for everyone in regional Australia and beyond.

## Transcript

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BOB ATKINSON, PRESENTER: Hello, my name is Bob Atkinson and I am the Commissioner for the Queensland Police Service. On Saturday the 7th of May 2005, an aircraft with 15 people on board, travelling from Bamaga crashed at Lockhart River. All 15 people were killed. One of those was Sally Urquhart, constable in the Queensland Police Service and the daughter of Shane and Elizabeth Urquhart. Sally was one of our brightest and best officers and sadly, her unlimited potential will now never be realised. This Australian Story is about her father Shane and his work to improve the safety of people travelling on regional airlines throughout Australia.

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: Being a musician myself, one of the ways that I thought would be a long term way of remembering Sally, was to have a piece of music composed in her honour. It's called 'Celebration for Sally'. The navy band in Sydney have it as part of their repertoire.

NATALIE URQUHART, SISTER: I definitely have a sense of Sally when I play that piece. Certain bits, like the bit at the start just reminds me of her being a police officer. You know, there's the police whistle and all that, and I just straight away think of Sal in her uniform, and then the reflective part of it, you know, I can think of maybe my last moments that I spent with Sal, and that's, they're the hard bits to get through. Mum and dad don't actually get the chance very much to come and watch me perform in the navy band. I think they got a huge buzz out of it. So um, I think it was probably a bit emotionally hard on mum. I think she might have had a few

tears there.

ELIZABETH URQUHART, MOTHER: There's just certain parts in it that really, I really love and I've told Natalie which parts they are. And every time they're played I just, yeah, it's my Sal.

(Excerpts from ABC News)

FEMALE REPORTER: Fifteen people died when a Transair Metro liner slammed into a rugged mountain in May 2005.

MALE REPORTER: Searches took until late in the afternoon to spot the wreckage. One of the passengers was Constable Sally Urquhart, a Bamaga police officer.

INVESTIGATOR: We'd like to know exactly what caused the accident.

FEMALE REPORTER 2: The Australian Transport Safety Bureau has described yesterday's tragedy as the country's most significant loss since the 1960s.

(End of Excerpt)

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: This was always an accident that was going to happen, not if and when, an accident that was always going to happen.

ELIZABETH URQUHART, MOTHER: And it was just amazing when he started how many people, like ex-pilots or pilots, got in contact with him to say, 'Oh yeah, I know of this that happened, and I know of that that happened'.

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: That caused me no end of grief, that caused me no end of angst in that I really needed to find out what the hell was going on here.

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: Sally was our eldest child, first born. I'm a school principal and I was in my first one teacher

school when Sally was due to be born.

BRENDAN URQUHART, BROTHER: Sal was one of those people where she was always my rock. Like I'd, as most young fella's do, get themselves in a bit trouble and that and Sal would be the first person I rang, every time.

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: She was fairly set on law, got an honours degree in law, went off and did some articles with a law firm and decided very promptly that that wasn't what she wanted to do.

ELIZABETH URQUHART, MOTHER: And she called us up and said 'I don't want to be a lawyer anymore, I can't do it, I hate it'. And like she topped family law in her year and all I could think of was, five years down the drain, you know.

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: Touch was her big thing and she was being looked at to be part of the Australian mixed open team.

ELIZABETH URQUHART, MOTHER: At that particular stage with her touch, she had met a couple of girls that were in the police service and Shane said to Sal, 'Have you ever thought of joining the police service?'

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: When Sally first went to the city station, she was doing the orientation visit and I think one of the senior officers might have said something like, 'this is Trad Thornton, keep away from Trad Thornton' or something like that. And I think that might have been like waving a red rag to a bull.

BRENDAN URQUHART, BROTHER: They didn't have much in common, but they just clicked. They never argued, they never worried about stuff, they just did what they had to do and to them life was beautiful.

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: Most of the young police officers do need to do a bit of country service, Sally promptly

transferred to Cairns.

JOHN 'BLUEY' O'GORMAN, FMR QLD POLICE INSPECTOR: I was inspector in Cairns. Sally was smart as a whip. She was a very down to earth, practical and keen young copper, and a very effective young copper.

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: Trad put his hand up and said I'd like to go to Cairns too, so he ended up in Cairns as well, and they got engaged before they went up there. So they were going to be married in September 2005.

JOHN 'BLUEY' O'GORMAN, FMR QLD POLICE INSPECTOR: And he and Sal went up to the Cape stations. She was a caring, compassionate person who genuinely loved other people. And I was more than proud to call Sally my friend, more than proud to call Sally my friend, and I still am.

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: One of the issues about living in isolated communities, is the fact that the major way of moving is by air transport.

JOHN 'BLUEY' O'GORMAN, FMR QLD POLICE INSPECTOR: I personally am terrified of aeroplanes, have been my whole life. If the young police had to come out of the communities for court, or for courses or any other reason, then it was by aircraft

ELIZABETH URQUHART, MOTHER: She often used to say to me, 'I wish I didn't have to fly out' and the night before it happened, she rang here. And the last thing she said to me was, 'The only thing mum, is I hate getting on that plane'. She said, 'I hate it'. She said, 'It just rattles'. And I said, 'You'll be right, love'. I said 'Think of happy thoughts when you get on there'. I said, 'Think of your wedding'. That's the last time I spoke to her.

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: Trad was still on duty up in the station at that particular time and he received the phone call from Lockhart River to say, 'Where's the plane? It hasn't

arrived’.

ELIZABETH URQUHART, MOTHER: Trad rang and I heard Shane say, ‘What’s the matter mate, what’s wrong?’ And Shane just got up and sort of thumped the bed. He said, ‘No’. And then he said to me, ‘They can’t find the plane’.

JOHN ‘BLUEY’ O’GORMAN, FMR QLD POLICE INSPECTOR: My mobile phone rang and it was a policeman. He said, ‘Have you heard about that plane?’, I said, ‘Yeah’. He said, ‘Sally was on it’. And I said, ‘How much hope is there?’ He said, ‘In reality’ and he was very strong in what he said, but it meant none. He said, ‘We haven’t found the wreck, but we’re quite sure we’re looking for a plane wreck’.

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: Within a couple of hours, I think it was by 9:30 that night we actually arrived in Cairns.

(Excerpt from ABC News, May 8, 2005)

RESCUE WORKER: Parts of the wreckage and some of the undergrowth was still burning with smoke when we got there yesterday afternoon.

ABC REPORTER: It’s been confirmed that there were no survivors among the 15 people aboard the plane which crashed in remote North Queensland yesterday.

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: Yesterday we lost our beautiful daughter Sally forever. She was 28-years-old.

ABC REPORTER 2: The flight was a regular passenger service returning to Cairns from the Cape York community of Bamaga.

ABC REPORTER 3: Crash investigators have confirmed that the plane slammed, at speed, into a steep hill and burst into flames on impact.

ABC REPORTER 4: Vital black box recorders were recovered yesterday. They were damaged from the impact and subsequent

fire but it's hoped they'll still be able to help determine what caused the crash.

(End of Excerpt)

(Excerpt from ABC News, May 11, 2005)

ABC REPORTER 5: Cairns at St Monica cathedral overflowed with family members, friends, police officers.

Police Commissioner Bob Atkinson consoled Shane Urquhart, whose daughter Sally was due to marry fellow Bamaga police officer, Trad Thornton, later this year.

(End of Excerpt)

BRENDAN URQUHART, BROTHER: It's all a bit of a blur when we did lose Sal but hearing my parents cry themselves to sleep was the most chilling thing that I've ever heard.

Mum, I can understand, but hearing my father cry himself to sleep was just, yeah. Not nice at all.

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: The most difficult thing however was coming back to Brisbane and waiting for the process of victim identification and it was 23 days from the accident before we were able to have a funeral for our daughter.

(Excerpt of footage from Police video, May 30, 2005, Sally Urquhart's funeral)

JOHN 'BLUEY' O'GORMAN, FMR QLD POLICE INSPECTOR: I think there was about 3,000 police at the funeral, the horses, 20 something motorcycles, the guard of honour, all escorted Sally along Anne Street to St John's Cathedral.

BOB ATKINSON, COMMISSIONER, QUEENSLAND POLICE: Today, Sally, we pay tribute to you. We salute you.

ELIZABETH URQUHART, MOTHER: Bluey O'Gorman organised it. It's pretty hard when you've got to sit there and pick your

daughter's casket. You sort of feel that, well, she's my girl, I know her best.

JOHN 'BLUEY' O'GORMAN, FMR QLD POLICE INSPECTOR: It was tough, and yet it was, it was an extreme honour for me to be able to take part in making sure that Sally's send-off was special for her.

TRAD THORNTON, FIANCÉE: Just before she was about to board the plane, I gave her a hug, I kissed her and I told her I loved her. I was also able to say goodbye. It was a token goodbye, but it was a goodbye.

BRENDAN URQUHART, BROTHER: Trad's lost his be all and end all. They were getting married, they were tight, they were going to be together for the rest of their lives.

And seeing that man get up there and speak was absolutely mind blowing.

TRAD THORNTON, FIANCÉE: As I walked towards the police truck, I turned to see my Sally for the last time. She was waving and smiling at me and I can't ask for a better last image of Sally.

(End of Excerpt)

ELIZABETH URQUHART, MOTHER: That was a huge day, and everything was just beautifully done. How Sal would have wanted it to be.

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: For quite a few months I guess we were grieving and not taking particular notice of what was going on. The Australian Transport Safety Bureau was investigating this particular crash.

ELIZABETH URQUHART, MOTHER: The ATSB were very good to us. They let us know what they could. I think Shane had made up his mind he was getting involved anyway, he knew there was more to it than just the crash.

(Excerpt from ABC News, December 2005)

ABC REPORTER: Seven months on an interim report's been released with few answers about what went wrong.

AUSTRALIAN TRANSPORT SAFETY BUREAU SPOKESMAN: We have ruled out a mechanical failure of the engines.

ABC REPORTER: Now victims' families are questioning a safety check which gave the aircraft the all-clear two months before the crash.

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: Was that audit carried out properly? The answer would be no, it wasn't.

(End of Excerpt)

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: At the particular time the company that was running the route from Cairns to Bamaga and back was a company called Aero Tropics. Aero Tropics was the name that was on the plane but they were actually responsible for the passenger lists and ticketing. The plane was actually owned and operated by a company called Lessbrook trading as Transair. Senator Jan McLucas from Cairns, she'd been doing a lot of investigating around Aero Tropics in particular and the operation up there.

(Excerpt of footage from Senate Estimates, October 2006)

KERRY O'BRIEN, QUEENSLAND SENATOR: I think Senator McLucas has got some questions that she wants to

JAN MCLUCAS, QUEENSLAND SENATOR: Yes. I want to ask some questions about CASA's (Civil Aviation Safety Authority) oversight of Lessbrook trading as Transair Propriety Limited.

(End of Excerpt)

MARK DAVIS, FMR STAFFER TO SEN. JAN MCLUCAS: I was Senator Jan McLucas's media adviser at the time of the accident. It very

quickly became apparent that we should also be looking at the regulatory authority, CASA, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority and the way that it was monitoring the aviation industry in North Queensland. North Queensland has got a very, very bad aviation safety record.

(Excerpt continued)

JAN MCLUCAS, QUEENSLAND SENATOR: What I'd now like to know is what action was taken by CASA following the November 2001 audit, the August 2004 audit, the February 2005 audit and the February 2006 audit.

BRUCE BYRON, FMR CASA CEO: From my, looking at the records.

MARK DAVIS, FMR STAFFER TO SEN. JAN MCLUCAS: The information that was starting to come from us from people in the aviation industry was very disturbing.

BRUCE BYRON, FMR CASA CEO: Recorded activities, were not anywhere near the same scale.

JAN MCLUCAS, QUEENSLAND SENATOR: Mr Byron, you have said that to me. I am sorry, I need more than that.

BRUCE BYRON, FMR CASA CEO: Senator, you also asked me what we have done in relation to other audits that have been done recently.

JAN MCLUCAS, QUEENSLAND SENATOR: I want, I want the detail of what actions CASA took following each of the four audits and I think it is very reasonable thing to ask.

(End of Excerpt)

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: I did some delving into other crashes in Australian history and found that exactly the same things had been occurring over a period of 10 years or so. There were incidents of aircraft landing on unauthorised airstrips, tyres blown on tarmacs, planes getting bogged on airstrips,

hydraulic failures, landing-gear failures and questions about the validity of pilots' endorsements. And the general commonality between all of these investigations seemed to be that CASA was involved somewhere, CASA was the oversight organisation, but these companies had deficiencies that weren't rectified. And they continued to fly with these deficiencies. I really thought then that there would be a process that would uncover all of this and that there would be some justice, accountability throughout the system.

(Excerpt from ABC News, April 2007)

KAREN BERKMAN, ABC REPORTER: The Australian Transport Safety Bureau report paints a terrifying picture.

(End of Excerpt)

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: It was one of the most comprehensive, detailed reports that the ATSB has ever produced.

(Excerpt continued)

KAREN BERKMAN, ABC REPORTER: In bad weather the Metro-liner came in for a complex instrument landing at Lockhart River with the pilot overloaded and an inexperienced 21-year-old co-pilot. Add to that confusing maps and a basic ground proximity warning system that would have alerted the crew too late.

BRUCE BYRON, FMR CASA CEO: I have never seen rates of descent that high, during an instrument approach, when so close to the ground.

ABC REPORTER: Transair was found to have contributed to the crash by inadequate training and supervision of pilots.

(End of Excerpt)

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: CASA had done very, very many reports on Transair, had come up with some recommendations. Transair had not carried any of them out and were still continuing to

operate with those things unattended.

(Excerpt from ABC News)

ABC REPORTER: The ATSB said the Civil Aviation Safety Authority had not properly monitored the airlines structure and operations.

(End of Excerpt)

MARK DAVIS, FMR STAFFER TO SEN. JAN MCLUCAS: And it appears that whatever actions CASA took was totally inadequate because here you suddenly have an airline with 15 people on board one of its aircrafts crashing into a mountain.

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: Once we'd seen the ATSB report, I guess my first thought was wow, 'cause it's all there, and there is going to be some justice and accountability about what happened in this particular case.

BRENDAN URQUHART, BROTHER: And it wasn't until the coroner's inquest, that's when it rattled me the most. Sitting there and listening to people lying through their teeth.

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: It seemed to be that the CASA legal team concentrated on discrediting the ATSB and the ATSB report.

(Excerpt from ABC News)

ABC REPORTER 3: Today the Coroner released his findings into the crash.

ABC REPORTER 4: Coroner Michael Barnes blamed Captain Brett Hotchin for the crash, a pilot criticised by colleagues for his dangerous flying practices.

(End of Excerpt)

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: We hold no grudges against the pilots whatsoever. Yes, the pilot in command certainly had a

reputation of doing some things that were probably outside the scope of what he needed to do. The issue is, he was allowed to do that. He was allowed to do that through poor company policy, poor company management and a lack of oversight by CASA.

(Excerpt from ABC News)

ABC REPORTER 4: The coroner was critical of Transair's safety management systems and pilot training practices, and while he criticised monitoring by CASA, he found the authority couldn't have prevented the accident.

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: We're not looking for blame. We're looking for someone to stand up and take responsibility.

TRAD THORNTON, FIANCEE: We're looking for answers and we were hoping that Mr Barnes would have made the numerous recommendations to stop something like this from happening again.

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: And the people of Australia especially if you're on rural airlines, if CASA's oversighting it, don't fly. Today's outcome, what a whole waste of time for all of us and we're just back to square one as far as I'm concerned.

(End of Excerpt)

BRENDAN URQUHART, BROTHER: That's when I was really worried about dad, I just thought that would be such a big blow to someone like dad that's put so much effort into it and pretty much just to get dirt thrown in his face.

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: I think the darkest times are when you are alone and the memories come flooding back. You hear some music or you see something or even smell something that reminds you of the past. And we realise just what we've lost.

MARK DAVIS, FMR STAFFER TO SEN. JAN MCLUCAS: I think a lot of people underestimated Shane's determination. It must have been

very painful for him. We could see the pain, that's for sure. But he never let go. Not once. Shane was looking to take it a step further and he encouraged I think, Senator McLucas and Senator Kerry O'Brien to have a look at the possibilities of a Senate inquiry into Lockhart River and into CASA.

NATALIE URQUHART, SISTER: If dad's really passionate about something, then he will push it to the end and, definitely getting up people's goat, getting in their faces, he's definitely, doesn't surprise me with dad actually at all. So he's not going to, wasn't going to let this one just slip away.

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: I just kept making a nuisance of myself, kept knocking on doors, meeting with people, meeting with the minister, writing emails, writing faxes, asking questions. Finally, the Senate committee decided that it would instigate an inquiry into CASA and other matters. There was 63 submissions from interested people around Australia about CASA.

(Excerpt of footage from Senate Inquiry, July last year)

CHAIR: Welcome Mr Urquhart.

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: I was one of those people. I'm not a pilot, I'm not a lawyer. But in the past three years I certainly have built up my knowledge about a whole range of issues surrounding, the actions of the aviation industry and in particular that of the regulator.

(End of Excerpt)

ELIZABETH URQUHART, MOTHER: 'Cause I think what got CASA with just this person who's just a school teacher, he won't know much. And I think they were surprised with what Shane knew.

NATALIE URQUHART, SISTER: Sometimes I get a little bit worried that perhaps he might be bringing things up that mum or we

don't necessarily want to get brought up again. Sometimes I think it's a little bit of an obsession, that he may need to back off. But this is what dad needs to do, this is what dad wants to do, and it's a good thing.

(Excerpt continued)

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: I'd like to make clear too that nothing is going to bring back any of the people who were lost at Lockhart River. However, to uncover the years of gross mismanagement, incompetence, self-indulgence and totally inconsistent application of safety regulations is just appalling. These endemic problems go right back to 1998 where reform was promised and reform has not happened. I could use the term corruption, but endemic problem within the organisation.

(End of Excerpt)

BRENDAN URQUHART, BROTHER: Once he gets to a certain point and I think that point has nearly been passed, with pursuing it, that he really needs to step back a bit. Mainly for mum and himself. I think he's pushed himself that little bit too far at the moment emotionally and I think he really needs to just stand back and actually grieve.

(Excerpt continued)

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: Someone also said 'people like myself shouldn't be complaining', what do we need to do? Wait for another accident before CASA needs to act?

Well CASA hasn't acted before accidents before. They wait until there's an accident or incident then they act.

(End of Excerpt)

SHANE URQUHART, FATHER: We were very happy with the outcome of that inquiry. It's the first time in three years that someone's paid attention and listened. I'm particularly

interested in the last recommendation about the Australian Audit Bureau having a good hard look at CASA's operations and how they do business and hopefully they'll be fixed. I feel we've had great success since the Senate Inquiry of last year. Especially since the release of the green paper recommendations by Minister Albanese. I'm particularly interested in the fact that the ATSB is now going to be a much more independent organisation. This simply means that CASA now can be investigated by the ATSB.

MARK DAVIS, FMR STAFFER TO SEN. JAN MCLUCAS: I think that Shane's efforts have led to a safer environment, a safer flying environment in Far North Queensland.

JOHN 'BLUEY' O'GORMAN, FMR QLD POLICE INSPECTOR: And I know that Shane and Liz aren't just doing it for Sal, their efforts are also on behalf the other 15 people who died. It's not just for Sally.

NATALIE URQUHART, SISTER: You know, the best outcome would be for this to never happen again. You know, to prevent it from happening to some other families. The outcome that dad has got, I think will definitely help in looking to the future and moving on. And not dwelling on, you know, how Sal died, but how she lived.

JOHN 'BLUEY' O'GORMAN, FMR QLD POLICE INSPECTOR: Someone as great as Sally doesn't come about by accident, it comes about because she had great parents. I suppose that's probably, in my own funny way, that's probably the best compliment that I could pay to them, that they were the people who gave the world such a wonderful person as Sally.

END CAPTIONS: The Federal Government expects two new aviation bills to become law by July.

One will create a small expert board 'to provide high level direction to CASA's regulatory and safety oversight role'.

The second will 'reinforce the independence of the ATSB' by establishing it as a separate statutory agency.

A Call From Lockhart River – Australian Story

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# Plane crash families fight for justice

by Peter Michael, The Courier-Mail  
3rd May 2017 6:20 AM

FAMILIES of the victims of one of Australia's worst aviation disasters have been blocked by insurance giant QBE from long-running legal action in the United States.

Fifteen people died in the 2005 Lockhart River crash on Cape York, but relatives yesterday told The Courier-Mail how they were "shocked and appalled" by a court order to end a nine-year lawsuit in the US against part-owners of the ill-fated Cairns-based Aero Tropics airline.

Lawyers for QBE obtained an order from the Supreme Court in Queensland restraining the Lockhart River families from taking any action other than to dismiss the damages claim before the US courts.

Twelve years on from the tragedy, the father of police officer Sally Urquhart, who died in the May 6, 2005 crash, said families had been victims of "bully boy tactics" and "intimidation" by Australia's biggest insurance company.

Brisbane schoolteacher Shane Urquhart, who lived in Caboolture at the time of the accident, said none of the families or their lawyers had been notified of the latest legal action before the court order.

“We’ve been fighting for justice for our lost loved ones for so long, and now we feel the judge and the legal system has been duped,” he said.

“It’s not just us, but anyone who gets on a plane in Australia needs to know the sort of bastardry one of the biggest aviation insurers in the country will use against victims of air disasters and their families,” he said. “None of the plaintiffs were informed. None of our lawyers contacted.”

QBE, according to its website, provides insurance to airlines, aircraft, airports, pilots, refuellers, baggage handlers and maintenance operators.

Reverend Mary Eseli’s son, Fred Bowie, and sister-in-law, Mardie Bowie, were among six victims of the air crash from the tiny indigenous communities of Injinoo and Bamaga, at the tip of Cape York.

“It has been an open wound in our hearts that has never healed,” she said.

“QBE has paid compensation and costs, where appropriate, in respect of the claims by relatives of the deceased passengers against the operator of the aircraft.”

Plane crash families fight for justice | Queensland Times

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CONSTABLE  
SALLY ELIZABETH URQUHART  
BORN 30 MARCH 1977  
DIED 7 MAY 2005  
KILLED ON DUTY



Sally URQUHART & her father

In memory of the 2 crew and 13 passengers  
who tragically lost their lives in the air  
disaster of the 7th of May 2005 when the  
Metroliner VH-TFU, en route from Bamaga  
to Cairns, crashed on 'South Pap' Iron Range,  
approx 11 kilometers from this site

David J D BANKS  
Frank Lawrence William BILLY  
Mardie Robyn BOWIE  
Fred Vejsil Solomon BOWIE  
Robert James BRADY  
Timothy R L DOWN - "Timmy-d"  
Edward "Ted" Charles GREEN  
Brett HOTCHIN - "Herman"  
Kenneth S B HURST  
Gordon Daniel KRIS  
Noel M LEWIS  
Paul Raymond NORRIS  
Arden Christopher SONTER  
Const Sally Elizabeth URQUHART  
Helena Phyllis WOOSUP  
May they rest in peace



Father of Sally Urquhart

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# Peter Allen FIGTREE

06/05/2020

## Peter Allen FIGTREE

AKA ?

Late of ?

NSW Redfern Police Academy Class # 199B

New South Wales Police Force

Regd. # 21207

**Rank:** Commenced Training – Monday 28 November 1983

Probationary Constable – appointed 24 February 1984

Constable – appointed 24 February 1985

Constable 1st Class – appointed ? ? ?

**Service:** From 28 November 1983 to 13 June 1989 = 5+ years  
Service

**Stations:** ?, Ballina HWP

**Awards:** No find on It's An Honour

**Born:** Friday 23 October 1964

**Died:** Tuesday 13 June 1989

**Age:** 24

**Cause:** Motor vehicle accident – passenger – Urgent Duty – Pursuit of SMV

Wardell, NSW

**Funeral date:** ?

**Funeral location:** ?, Lismore

**Grave location:** Buried at Lismore ( Goonellabah ) Lawn Cemetery –

Portion: G Section: 53 Lot: 41

**Grave GPS:** Lat: -28.8333333 Long: 153.3238888888889

28 50' 00S / 153 19' 26E

### **DOUBLE POLICE FATALITY**

[alert\_green]Peter **IS mentioned** on the Police Wall of Remembrance[/alert\_green]



SenCon Glenn Rampling ( 1989 )



Constable Peter Figtree ( 1989 )

About 11.25pm on **13 June, 1989** police in **Byron Bay** commenced a high speed pursuit of a panel van. The pursued vehicle drove south in the **Coast Road**, followed by the Byron Bay Police vehicle, and into **Ballina**. As both vehicles continued south through Ballina, a local Highway Patrol vehicle **driven by Constable 1st Class Beaver**, with **Senior Constable Rampling** and **Constable 1st Class Figtree** as **passengers**, joined the pursuit. More police vehicles arrived to assist as the pursuit continued through the township of **Wardell**. About **five kilometres** south of **Wardell** the Ballina Highway Patrol vehicle began to draw level with the offending vehicle. As it did so, the driver of the pursued vehicle drove across to the centre of the roadway and clipped the front of the **Byron Bay Police car**. As a result, the police vehicle veered across the road and skidded in loose gravel before colliding with a power pole.

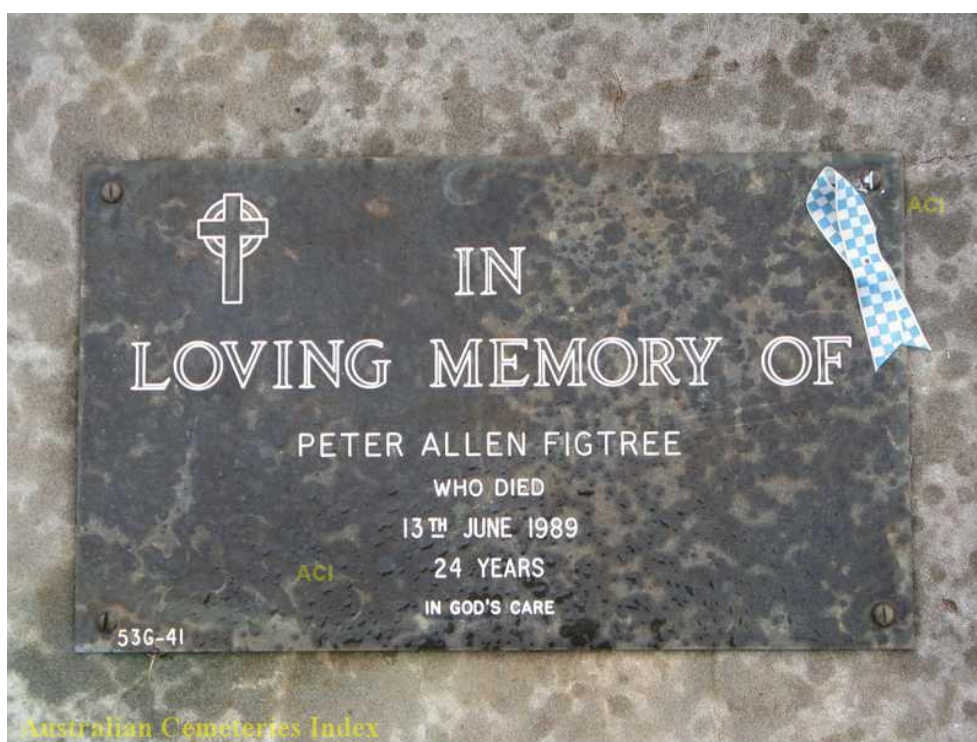
All three police were trapped for some time in the badly damaged police car and when freed were conveyed by ambulance to the **Lismore Base Hospital**. **Constable Beaver** recovered from

internal injuries received, however **Constable Figtree** died before he reached hospital and **Senior Constable Rampling** died a short time later.

**Senior Constable Rampling** was born in **1959** and joined the New South Wales Police Force on **15 January, 1979**. At the time of his death he was attached to the **Ballina Detectives**.

**Constable Figtree** was born in **1964** and joined the New South Wales Police Force on **28 November, 1983**. At the time of his death he was attached to the **Ballina Highway Patrol**.

[divider]



Peter Allen FIGTREE grave plaque

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## Deadly toll

By Jonathan Pearlman

**November 6, 2004**

Alone in his patrol car, **Chris Thornton** had the police siren flashing as he chased a white sedan through **Woy Woy**.

Thornton, 35, a highway patrolman, had been in the force for 15 years. He was, his mother says, "the best driver I have ever seen".

The reason for the chase that night in April 2002 is unknown. Both cars were seen travelling at high speed. Thornton was about 50 metres behind.

Meanwhile, Leonard Rowley, 56, an unlicensed driver, was driving to his local KFC to pick up dinner. He saw the first car flash past and judged – wrongly – that he had time to turn out in front of the patrol car. Thornton tried to avoid Rowley's car but clipped the back, veered onto the wrong side of the road and hit a power pole.

Thornton died on the spot, which is marked by a permanent stainless-steel cross. Rowley later received a suspended two-year sentence.

"His life from the age of 12 was about helping people," says Thornton's mother, **Freada Thornton**. "He was in the surf club and he was there to rescue people and then he went into the force and he was doing the same thing." His father, **Barry Thornton**, says: "He loved life. He had been in Gosford for 15 years and was so popular with the community there."

Police pursuits are, says Barry, a necessary evil: "If they don't catch the criminals there will be more deaths on the roads. The ones that they're in pursuit of are the idiots that have done the wrong thing to start with."

But pursuits have come at a cost to the NSW Police Department. Fifteen officers have died as a result of high-speed chases, beginning with the death of Constable George Boore in 1937.

Details provided by the NSW Police Association show a steady stream of fatalities involving cars and motorcycles. The full list of casualties is as follows:

April 2, 1937: Constable George Boore;

June 2, 1954: Constable Cecil Sewell;

November 14, 1958: Constable Brian Boaden;

December 23, 1958: Constable William [Lord](#);

October 14, 1961: Constable James Kinnane;

September 7, 1963: Constable Colin Robb;

December 2, 1976: Constable Terry Moncur;

January 3, 1985: Constable Wayne Rixon;

July 25, 1985: Detective-Constable Steven Tier;

October 20, 1987: Constable Themelis Macarounas;

August 24, 1988: Constable Peter Carter;

June 13, 1989: Constable Peter Figtree;

June 14, 1989: Senior Constable Glenn [Rampling](#);

January 14, 2001: Senior Constable James Affleck;

April 13, 2002: Senior Constable Christopher Thornton.

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/Police-Pursuits/Deadly-toll/2004/11/05/1099547386960.html>

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June 2019

**Gezza J Kt** Believe it or not, I was working the radio comms for this at Lismore station that night. Called the whole thing & did all the post crash co-ord. A horrible night shift with Sgt GJ Menzies, S/C Mark Burridge, Const's Jordan, Gahan & Me.

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**June 2019**

30 year memorial – **Senior Constable Glenn Rampling** – **Constable First Class Peter Figtree** – A memorial service will be held at the **Ballina Surf Club, Lighthouse Parade, Ballina** on **Thursday, 13 June 2019** at 1000hr to commemorate the **30th anniversary** of the death of **Senior Constable Glenn Donald Rampling** and **Constable 1st Class Peter Allen Figtree**.

**Senior Constable Rampling** was tragically **killed on duty** on **14 June 1989** and **Constable 1st Class Figtree** was tragically **killed on duty** on **13 June 1989**, both as a result of motor vehicle collision at Wardell, south of Ballina.

\*\*\*\*\*

Glenn Taylor

23 hrs ( 13 June 2019 )

Attended this morning quite a moving 30 year memorial service for **Glenn Rampling** and **Peter Figtree** killed in a car chase near Ballina. May they rest in peace.



Photo by: Glenn Taylor



SEN / CON G. RAMPLING

CON 1/C P. FIGTREE

*Why...*

THE SILENCE  
MY BURNING EYES & DISBELIEF SO HARD TO COMPREHEND  
WE'VE LOST TWO VERY SPECIAL WORKMATES.  
DEVASTATION COULD BE THE ONLY WAY TO DESCRIBE THIS  
FEELING, YET THERE IS STILL SOMETHING MISSING.  
IT IS LIKE SOMEBODY, SOME GREAT GOD HAS COME AND  
REACHED INTO OUR HEARTS & REEFED A PART OF IT OUT.  
HOW DARE SOMEBODY TAKE THE LIVES OF THE TWO STRONG  
MEN THAT WERE SO PART OF ALL OUR LIVES.  
IT HAS PLACED A VOID IN OUR LIVES AND IT IS HARD TO  
COMPREHEND THE FEELING... BUT...  
THE MEMORY OF THESE MEN WILL CONTINUE.

Photo by: Glenn Taylor



Photo from: Geoff Lowe Peter FIGTREE back row, 4th from left. Redfern Police Academy Class 199B



Photo by: Ken Medway

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# Robert Edwin BROTHERRSON

06/05/2020

## Police Remembrance Day:

### Robert Edwin BROTHERRSON

late of Oak Flats

New South Wales Police Force

Goulburn Police Academy – Class DPP 10 ( Class 4 )( Class 284 )

Rank: Nil. Student Police Officer ( S.P.O. )

Stations: NSW Police Academy Goulburn, Warilla ( Lake Illawarra ) – Field Placement

Service: From ? September 2001 to 1 February 2002 = 4+ months

Born: Tuesday 18 April 1972

Event: Thursday 24 January 2002

Died: Friday 1 February 2002

Cause: Motor Vehicle Accident – Rear seat passenger, F6, Dapto

Age: 29 years, 9 months, 14 days

Funeral date: Wednesday 6 February 2002 @ 10am

Funeral location: St Paul's Catholic Church, Tongarra Rd,  
Albion Park

Buried at: Lakeside Memorial Park, Kanahooka Lawn Cemetery,  
Kanahooka Rd, Kanahooka, NSW

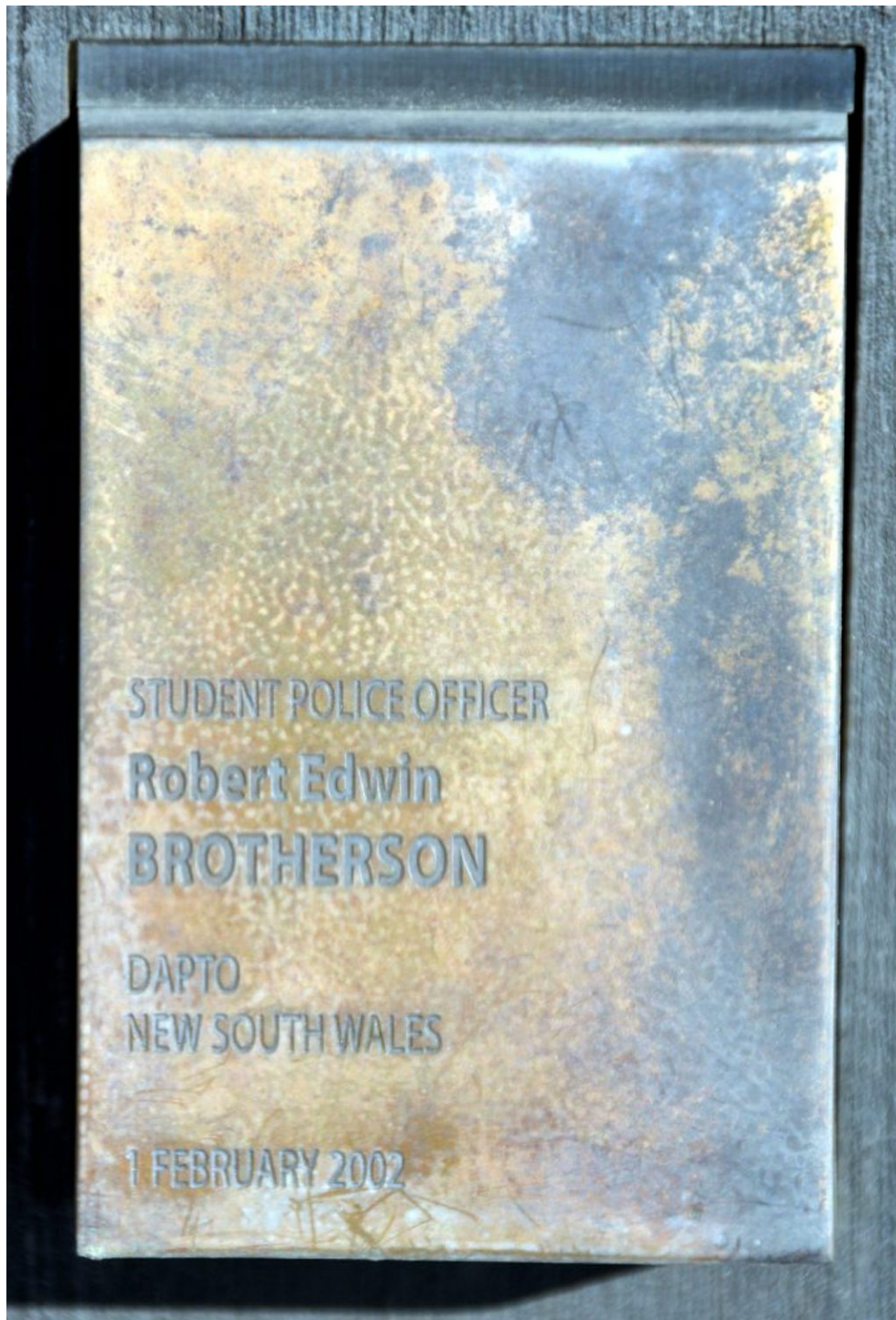
Grave GPS:



Robert BROTHERSON



Headstone



Touch plate – National Police Wall of Remembrance, Canberra

**Robert IS mentioned on the National Police Wall of Remembrance**

About 7.20pm on 24 January, 2002 the student was a rear nearside passenger in a police Commodore sedan on the F6 Freeway at Dapto, heading to a Persons Trapped traffic accident, when the police vehicle, negotiating a broad right bend, hit a sheet of water, causing aquaplaning ( asymmetrical

drag ), spun and collided with an oncoming truck. The student sustained critical head and internal injuries and was admitted to the Wollongong Hospital where he passed away, 9 days later, on 1 February, 2002.

At the time of his death the Student Police Officer was on the field placement phase of his police training at the Lake Illawarra Local Area Command.

I have absolutely no doubt that had we not had this unfortunate accident, Rob would have made a great policeman.  
**Sorry mate !.**

The death of Student Police Officer Robert Brotherson, who was a Student at the Goulburn Police Academy, led to the Robert Brotherson Trophy which is now presented to the student with the highest academic achievement in the policing program, at the Academy, during each new course. The trophy is awarded to that highest academic achiever at the Attestation Parade.

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# MERCURY

ILLAWARRA

SINCE  
1855

January 26-27, 2002

WEEKEND

## Police crash inquiry



SEE PAGE 2

## Student officer still critical

By DANIELLE WOOLAGE

Police will investigate whether a student officer, critically injured when a police car collided with a truck near Dapto, should have been in the vehicle.

The Goulburn police academy student, a 29-year-old Illawarra man, based at Werrills Police Station for four weeks' training, remains in a critical but stable condition in Wollongong Hospital after the F6 crash on Thursday night.

He had numerous fractures and bruises and underwent emergency surgery to have a ruptured spleen removed yesterday.

Lake Illawarra Area commander Superintendent Gary Hodson said the student officer was in a car with two police officers when the vehicle "lost traction" in heavy rain and crossed a grass median strip and spun into the path of a truck at about 7.15pm.

The police officers were on their way to an accident near Dapto, where people were believed to be trapped. "The lights and sirens were activated - the officers were responding to an urgent duty run," Supt Hodson said.

But he refused to confirm whether or not the student officer was allowed to be in the vehicle during an urgent response.

"Those incidents will be subject to an investigation," he said. Supt Hodson said the student officer, a back seat passenger, bore much of the brunt of the crash.

He said the student officer had only been at the station for two weeks.

The driver of the vehicle, Senior Constable Greg Calender, was ejected from the car's rear window and suffered concussion, lacerations to his skull and severe bruising.

The 38-year-old, a former highway patrol officer, remained under observation at Wollongong Hospital and may



**CRASH SCENE:** Police at the F6 just south of Dapto (above and far left) where a police car crashed into a truck on Thursday night injuring three officers.

**LEFT:** Senior Constable Greg Calender who was injured in the crash.

2 - ILLAWARRA MERCURY, Saturday, January 26, 2002

## Police investigate Dapto 'duty run' crash

be released today. "The police officer driving the car had extensive experience and was driving the vehicle for the conditions," Supt Hodson said.

The front seat passenger, a 22-year-old probationary constable suffered bruising and grazes but was released from hospital yesterday.

Supt Hodson said the cause of the accident was being investigated by the South East Region crash investigation unit and members of the critical

Wollongong detectives, the South East Region Professional Standards management unit and senior Shoalhaven police will oversee the investigation.

A Goulburn Police Driver Training School spokesman said there was a protocol for student officers travelling in police vehicles but he could not comment on the details while the accident was being investigated.

The Mercury contacted the NSW Police Association, the South-East Region Office, the Police Minister's

office, the Goulburn Police Academy and the police media unit but no-one in authority was prepared to explain the protocol during the investigation.

The Local Area Command field experience handbook states that during their placement students should be exposed to "a broad range of policing functions. The only restriction will be that students are not to be deployed on mobile highway patrol activities."

The car involved in Thursday's collision was not a highway patrol vehicle.



2 — ILLAWARRA MERCURY, Saturday, January 26, 2002



## Student police officer still fighting for his life

ILLAWARRA MERCURY, PAGE 5, TUESDAY 29 JAN. 2002

By JODIE DUFFY and AAP

A student police officer, injured when a squad car and truck collided near Dapto last week, is still fighting for his life in Wollongong Hospital.

The 29-year-old father of two had just entered his 16th week of police training and was one of three

officers injured in the crash which happened during a response to a triple-0 call on Thursday night.

Police said the student officer had only been at the Lake Illawarra command for two weeks and was to have stayed another fortnight before returning to the police academy.

Yesterday, a Warilla police spokesman said the student

remained in a critical but stable condition, having suffered a ruptured spleen and broken limbs.

The two police officers and the student were attending an accident on the F6 when the police car skidded onto the wrong side of the road and collided with an oncoming truck.

A 22-year-old probationary constable, who had been on the job for

18 months, suffered lesser injuries in the crash.

The driver, Senior Constable Greg Calender, 38, remains in Wollongong Hospital, where he is being treated for lacerations to his skull and severe bruising.

Investigations are under way into the cause of the accident and no decision has been made if any charges will be laid.



LAKE 14. FATAL COLLISION. F6 DAPTO  
 DAILY TELEGRAPH. WED. 30 JAN 2002. P: 7

# Tragic smash ends a young man's career

DAILY TELEGRAPH, WEDNESDAY 30 JANUARY 2002, PAGE 7

By KARA LAWRENCE  
 Police Reporter

ROBERT Brotherson had two dreams in life — to become a dad and join the NSW police service.

A FROID husband and father of two young sons, Robert's dreams seemed fulfilled after being posted to his first on-the-job position at Warilla.

But a tragic accident while responding to a 600 call last week wrecked the 28-year-old's dream career and almost cost him his life.

The student officer and two colleagues were responding to an urgent call to people trapped in a car crash on the F6 Prince of Wales Highway when their vehicle skidded after hitting a wet patch and collided with a truck.

The driver and another officer sustained cuts and bruising in the crash but Robert, who was in the back of the vehicle, suffered a broken leg, broken arm, fractured pelvis, ruptured spleen and punctured lungs.

Mr Brotherson's wife and family are keeping a vigil by his bedside in Wollongong Hospital, where the 28-year-old Hurley Oak Plains man is in an induced coma to help his brain and body recover.

Doctors removed his spleen and yesterday he underwent further surgery to fix his broken arm and leg.

But the most heartbreaking injury for the Brotherson family — which views the crash as a "tragic accident" — is his massive head injuries.

"We had a meeting with the doctor yesterday and the next 24 to 48 hours is crucial, if he can get through that," his father Barry told The Daily Telegraph yesterday.

"He's got massive brain injuries so he's never going to be the Robert we knew," he said.

Robert's father, his mother Marion and wife Melissa are taking turns visiting him.

"We talk to him all the time, tell him things, keep him informed about his kids," said his father.

"They're too young to understand. The eldest one's not two and the youngest one's not quite one. It breaks your heart to hear them call him daddy."

Mr Brotherson, the youngest and only son, had lived in Oak Flats all his life.

His sister, Donna Wilson, said her brother loved animals and children dearly.

"He'd always had an old head on young shoulders. A very kind, gentle person, always wanted to be a dad," she said.



Shattered dream ... proud father Robert Brotherson loved his family and his job.



Mr Brotherson had said his choice of becoming a police officer was in his nature.

When his father Barry expressed concerns over the dangers of policing, Robert had replied: "Dad, if I'm going to go, I'm going to go."

"It's in his nature to help. He's always been a good kid, never been in trouble. He always seems the very good ones get together," he said.

After school, he ran his own masonry business for about nine years before joining Gosburn's police academy last September.

He moved down to Gosburn with his wife and two sons, Blake, 22 months old, and Ewan, 11 months old.

After three months' training, he was posted to Warilla station on January 7. His aim was to join the police dog squad.

"He absolutely loved it," said Mr Brotherson of his training.

Mr Brotherson said the family have been delighted with the strength of support among police and the Rural Fire Service, for which his father is a long-time volunteer. Robert also did some RFS volunteering.

Wollongong Hospital has been flooded with concerned police, and both Acting Deputy Police Commissioner Peter Walsh and RFS Commissioner Phil Koperberg have been in touch with the family.

Police Commissioner Peter Ryan has also been following his progress closely.

Mr Brotherson said while his son would probably never be able to continue policing, his family was immensely proud.

"We were quite happy for him to do what he was doing and to be where he was. And he didn't wish to be anywhere else."

## Death Notices

### Illawarra Mercury

**BROTHERSON, Robert (Rob) Edwin.** — February 1, 2002 as a result of an accident, of Oak Flats; beloved husband of Melissa and devoted father of Blake and Ewen, much loved son of Barry and Marian, adored little brother and brother-in-law of Kim and Steven, Suanne and Stephen, Donna and Ian, Tracey and John and brother-in-law to Darren. Son-in-law to Janet and John Gal. 'Big brother to Jade' and loved uncle to his nieces and nephews.

Aged 29 years.

**Sat. 2 Feb 2002**

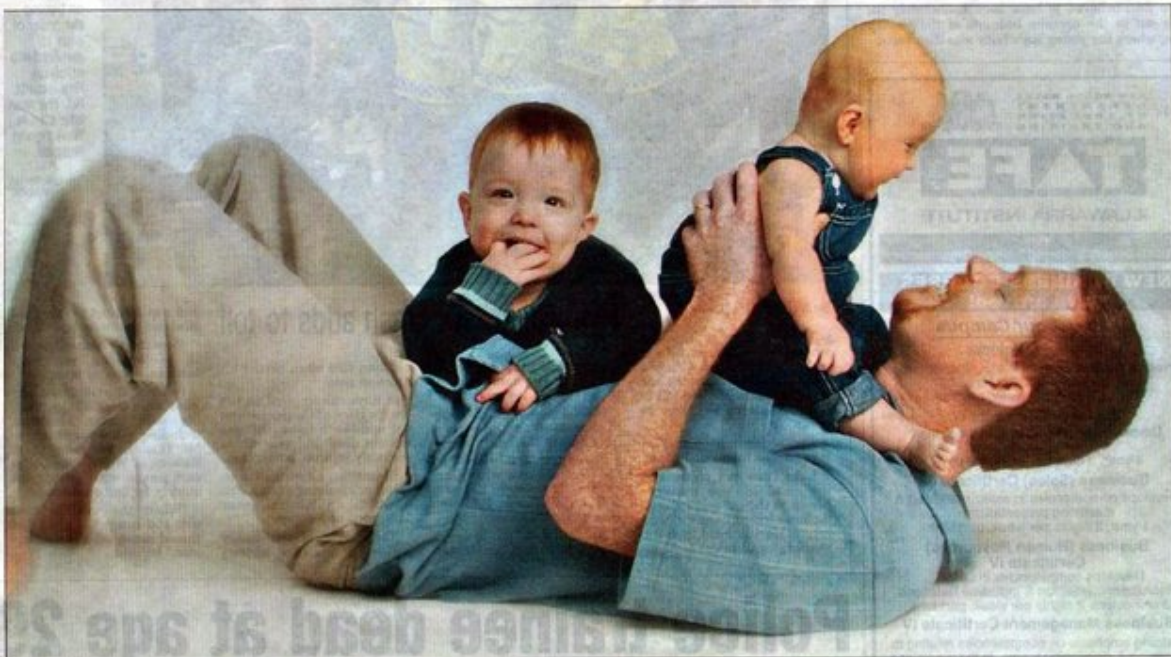
*A life lived with integrity,  
compassion and love.*

Please watch these columns for funeral arrangements.



**W'Gong**  
**H PARSONS 4228 9622**  
*Proudly Australian*

## Dead policeman a man of great compassion, integrity and love



**ONCE UPON A TIME:** Police trainee Robert Brotherson with sons Blake and Ewen before death snatched him away from his loving family.

**BABIES OF 2001**  
 SPECIAL LIFTOUT



**Cross-driving**  
 Cars with split personalities  
 DRIVE LIFTOUT



**Dead policeman a man of great compassion, integrity and love**



ONCE UPON A TIME: Police trainee Robert Brotherson with sons Blake and Ewen before death snatched him away from his loving family.

**Shattered dreams**

By LISACARTY  
 Toddlers Blake and Ewen Brotherson are too young to really know the dad they've lost. But their mum Melissa knows exactly the words she will use to paint a picture of the big-hearted student policeman who died yesterday aged 29. She'll tell the boys their father, who sustained horrific injuries when a police car collided with a truck last week, was a man of integrity, a man of compassion and a man of love.  
 Robert Brotherson died in Wollongong Hospital, with his family by his side, after they made the heart-rending decision to switch off his life support. He had been based at Lake Illawarra Police Station when he sustained broken bones and internal and head injuries in the accident on January 24.  
 Mr Brotherson, Senior Constable Greg Callender and a probationary constable were responding to an emergency call about a car crash when they were involved in the accident on the FV Str Coat Callender, who was driving, was released from hospital earlier this week, after being treated for lacerations and bruising.  
 The policeman sustained less serious injuries. Their police car skidded in the wet. □ CONTINUED PAGE 2

CLASSIFIEDS: 4221-2222 TV IN WEEKENDER WEATHER: WOLLONGONG SHOWERS, 28. DETAILS PAGE 63

**Police trainee dead at age 29**

2 — ILLAWARRA MERCURY, Saturday, February 2, 2002

□ FROM PAGE 1

and hit a truck travelling in the opposite direction. A police investigation is under way.

At the time of the accident, Mr Brotherson had been training as a policeman for four months and was due back at the Goulburn Police Academy in a fortnight.

His 21-year-old wife and their boys Blake, going on two, and Ewen, nearly one, had moved to Goulburn to be with him while he fulfilled a lifelong dream.

Last night Melissa, who married Robert 2½ years ago at St Paul's in Albion Park, said her husband was a wonderfully compassionate man who would have made a fantastic policeman.

His graduation from the



“Our big dream was to come back to our little house in Oak Flats - it's not much but we love it - and do it up and then take the kids backpacking around Europe when they were 15 and 16”  
**Melissa Brotherson**

academy later this year would have been a proud and exciting moment.

“Our big dream was to come back to our little house in Oak Flats - it's not much but we love it - and do it up, and then take the kids backpacking around Europe when they were 15 and 16,” she said.

Mr Brotherson's compassion extended to animals. His menagerie included two dogs, a cat,

two birds and a turtle.

And he wasn't without a sometimes whacky sense of humour.

He surprised close friends in Canada by leaping out of a closet wearing Speedos and a bow.

Those same friends are now with Mrs Brotherson, her boys and Mr Brotherson's parents Barry and Marian as they try to come to grips with his death.

Mrs Brotherson praised the police from Lake Illawarra and the Police Association for their support.

She said she planned to take up her place at Wollongong University, where she is enrolled in the first year of an arts/law degree - and renovate their home as they'd planned.

Lake Illawarra local area commander Superintendent Gary Hodsdon paid tribute to Mr Brotherson, saying he had impressed everyone with his ability, enthusiasm and compassion.

“Robert had always wanted to be a police officer and was committed to finishing his training and doing the job,” Mr Hodsdon said.

Funeral arrangements have yet to be finalised.

# Trainee policeman loses fight for life after crash

A STUDENT policeman involved in a crash while on duty on the NSW south coast last week died yesterday.

Robert Brotherson, 29, died in Wollongong Hospital following a crash on the F6 Freeway at Dapto.

Lake Illawarra Local Area Commander Superintendent Gary Hodsdon said Mr Brotherson had been on attachment to the command, as part of the Constable Education Program run jointly by the NSW police and Charles Sturt University.

"In the short time we had known Robert, he had impressed everyone he met with his ability, enthusiasm and compassion," Supt Hodsdon said.

The crash occurred near the intersection of Emerson Rd when police from the Lake Illawarra Local Area Command were responding to an urgent job on the freeway.

The police vehicle skidded on the roadway and collided with a truck travelling in the opposite direction.



Robert Brotherson

Mr Brotherson and two other officers were taken to Wollongong Hospital.

One of the officers was treated for minor injuries and has since been released.

The second officer was treated for a serious laceration to his head and remains in a stable condition in hospital.

Mr Brotherson underwent surgery for multiple injuries but was pronounced dead yesterday.

**BROTHERSON, Robert (Rob) Edwin.** — February 1, 2002 as a result of an accident, of Oak Flats; beloved husband of Melissa and devoted father of Blake and Ewen, much loved son of Barry and Marian, adored little brother and brother-in-law of Kim and Steven, Suanne and Stephen, Donna and Ian, Tracey and John and brother-in-law to Darren. Son-in-law to Janet and John Gal. Big brother to Jade and loved uncle to his nieces and nephews.

Aged 29 Years.

*A life lived with integrity, compassion and love.*

Requiem mass for the repose of his soul will be celebrated at, St. Paul's Catholic Church, Tongarra Road, Albion Park tomorrow, Wednesday at 10.00 am. Following the mass the funeral will proceed to Lakeside Memorial Park, Kanahooka Road, Dapto. Relatives and friends of the Brotherson family are invited to attend. Flowers, or donations to Blake and Ewen Brotherson Trust Fund would be appreciated.

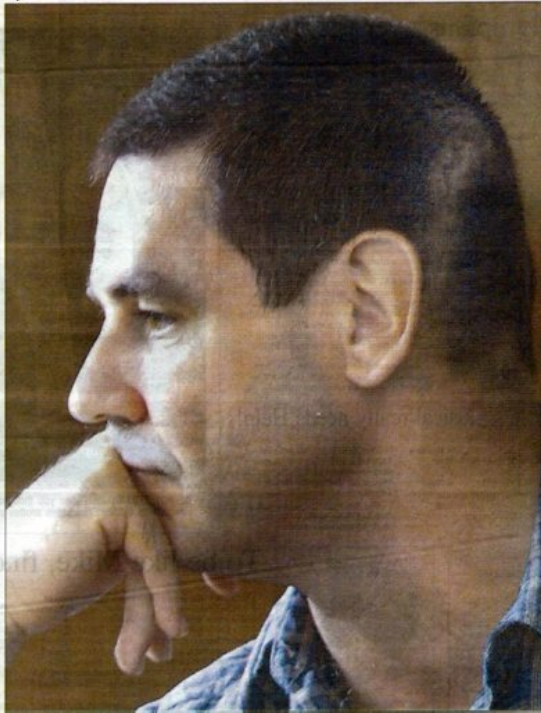
 **W'Gong**  
**H PARSONS 4228 9622**  
*Proudly Australian*

**BROTHERSON, Robert (Rob) Edwin.** — February 1, 2002. Robert, you are a part of our family chain and although it has been broken and you are no longer here, we will never forget you. We will never forget our memories of growing up together the good times, the bad - but most of all never forget the love we have for each other. It is your turn now to look down on us and as you do, know that we will always love you and be there for your boys and will keep your memory alive with many happy tales. You will always be our little brother, your loving sisters, Kim, Suanne, Donna and Tracey.

# SORRY

## Crash cop's last word to trainee in the back seat

Illawarra Mercury, Page 5, Wednesday 6 February 2002



TRAGIC: Senior Constable Greg Callander, right, at home after the accident which claimed the life of Robert Brotherson, above. Main picture: ROBERT PEE



SEN CONST CALLANDER

### Fatal crash cop tells: my agony

By LISA CARTY

A veteran policeman told yesterday how he was hurled through the back window of his car in a tragic crash that killed a student officer.

Senior Constable Greg Callander will be among the mourners who farewell Oak Flats man Robert Brotherson at St Paul's church at Albion Park this morning.

In a Mercury exclusive, Snr Const Callander has told how his final word to his junior colleague was "sorry" as their car spun out of control into an oncoming truck.

FULL REPORT, PICTURE: TURN TO PAGE 5

By LISA CARTY

Veteran policeman Greg Callander vividly remembers the last sickening seconds of the car accident which claimed a colleague's life.

As their vehicle speared across the F6 into the path of an oncoming truck, Senior Constable Callander said one word to his back-seat passenger Robert Brotherson.

He said sorry.

Seconds later, Snr Const Callander was hurled through the back window, while student police officer Mr Brotherson and a probationary constable were slumped in a driverless car on the other side of the freeway.

They were 80m from Snr Const Callander, but as he peered through the rain he saw no movement and feared the worst.

Mr Brotherson's colleagues survived the January 24 accident, which occurred near Dapto, but tragically he did not. Mr Brotherson, 29, of Oak Flats, died of his injuries last Friday.

Today, Snr Const Callander will be

among mourners at Mr Brotherson's funeral.

Yesterday, recuperating at home, Snr Const Callander - a 43-year-old Warilla policeman - told how he had stayed calm, used his skills during the accident and saved his tears for later.

"We were just going along the freeway in the car, doing the speed limit, when the car started skipping out," he said.

"I calculated it took at least seven seconds to get from one side of the freeway to the other. We did a 180 (degree turn).

"I felt very calm. I knew what was happening but there was nothing I could do about it.

"I was conscious of taking steps to minimise what was going to happen.

"We were rotating and I was watching the truck coming. I was thinking that if he slowed down I could get in front of him.

"I knew the position of the truck and the car and I basically knew what to expect.

"I knew Robert was going to be worst off but I didn't expect it to be as bad as it was."

The three men were rushed to Wollongong Hospital where, the next morning, Snr Const Callander learned the seriousness of Mr Brotherson's injuries.

On Friday, when he learned that Mr Brotherson's family had decided to switch off his life support, Snr Const Callander said he "shed quite a few tears".

Mr Brotherson's family had been wonderfully supportive to him and had visited him in hospital, he said.

"They have been unbelievable. They've said that these things happen ..."

Snr Const Callander sustained cuts and bruises, a broken rib, and scalp injuries which needed 35 stitches and have left him with lingering dizziness.

He can't believe the accident didn't kill him. "I shouldn't be here, I know that," he said.

He hopes to get back to the job he loves - the job he began when Mr Brotherson was born - within a few months.

Snr Const Callander said he expected to be interviewed by police investigating the crash some time next week.

I knew what was happening but there was nothing I could do about it ... We were rotating and I was watching the truck coming. I was thinking that if he slowed down I could get in front of him.

# Farewell to a friend

Illawarra Mercury, Page 5, Thursday 7 Feb 2002



GOODBYE: It rained from the heavens and from the hearts yesterday as family, friends and colleagues bemoaned the loss of a police officer Robert Brotherson, who was killed in a car accident in Dapto last Friday. PHOTOS: NICKY PATE

## Tragic loss to the community

By LISA CARTY

Trainer officer Robert Brotherson was buried with full police honours yesterday - just three days before his younger son's first birthday.

St Paul's at Albion Park, the same church in which Mr Brotherson was married just 2 1/2 years ago, was packed as mourners paid tribute to the man who would have graduated as a police officer in September.

Mr Brotherson, 29, died on Friday, eight days after he sustained horrific injuries when a police car crashed in the wet and foggy conditions on the F6 at Dapto.

The former police cook was well on his way to fulfilling a lifelong dream to join the police, and would have made an outstanding officer, using Police Commissioner Ken Moroney told the service.

"Valuations at funerals are never easy. For police they generally involve a recasting of a long and distinguished career of a dedicated officer who has locally and faithfully served the community of NSW," Mr Moroney said.

"But today is something different. That Robert Brotherson died before he was attested as a police officer makes his untimely death all the more tragic.

"Robert's passing has saddened everyone who knew him, but he died doing what he loved. It was his dream to join the NSW Police, a dream that was

HONOURED: Police officers form a guard of honour outside St Paul's church in Albion Park yesterday. PHOTOS: NICKY PATE

being fulfilled. In the short time that Robert spent studying to become a police officer, he impressed everyone around him, including a spirit of camaraderie, loyalty and friendship - the qualities of a good police officer.

"His lecturers tell me he had what it took to be an exemplary police officer.

Family friends remembered Mr Brotherson as a man devoted to his parents, his four older sisters, his wife Melissa and their boys Blake, twenty-two, and baby Evren.

They recalled his man's assessment that one boy could not be as much as four girls. Robert's enthusiasm for Alpha songs and his inability to hold a tune, and his passion for travelling.

It was on one of his many trips that he met Catherine Dawn Brown who yesterday paid tribute to her great man. "A couple of times this week I have heard Rob referred to with

the phrase 'his old boss on young shoulders' - the names an apt description," Mr Brown said.

"He set goals at a very early age and always had a plan on how to reach them.

"I moved with Rob for a few weeks one time and couldn't help but notice that his matter where we went he was sure to say a quick hello and 'how do you do?' or anyone he knew, with that cracked smile on his face every time."

Police Minister Michael Cook, who attended the funeral, said Mr Brotherson's death was tragic.

"It is a situation that has led to the waste of someone who would have been a top-line police officer," Mr Cook said.

"From all the discussions I've had - he clearly was someone who was committed to the police force and had a burning ambition to be in it, it's a loss for the community."



**HONOURED:** Police officers form a guard of honour outside St Paul's church in Albion Park yesterday.  
 Mercury. Page 5. Thursday 7 February, 2002. Funeral Robert Brotherson  
 Picture: ROBERT PEET

# Comrades farewell recruit

By JAEDENE HUDSON

HE HAD two loves in his life — his family and the NSW police force.

Yesterday, members of both farewelled Robert Brotherson, "the man everyone wanted to be around".

The recruit died last Friday, eight days after he was critically injured in a car accident while responding to an emergency call.

Mr Brotherson had been posted at Warilla station near Wollongong for just one month.

More than 200 mourners filled St Paul's Catholic



Robert Brotherson

Church at Albion Park to farewell the 29-year-old yesterday, including two colleagues injured in the same accident and Police Minister Michael Costa.

Best friend Ewen Brown told mourners how he first met Mr Brotherson, a keen traveller, on one of his trips.

"I have heard Rob referred to with the phrase 'an old head on young shoulders' — this seems an apt description," Mr Brown said.

Mr Brotherson's brother-in-law Darren Gal told of a "loving guy" who would have made an exemplary police officer. "His family were the centre of his life," he said.

Mr Brotherson's two young sons Blake, 1, and Ewen, who turns one on Saturday, were present.

# MERCURY

ILLAWARRA

SINCE 1855

WEEKEND EDITION February 22 - 23, 2003

\$1.50 (incl GST)

**GREAT WEEKEND READING**



FREE LIFTOUTS INSIDE TODAY

**2002 SPORTS STAR OF THE YEAR**

**It's Kerryn McCann**

FULL REPORT BACK PAGE

# I'm responsible

By JENNY DENNIS

## Police death driver admits negligence



MR BROTHERSON

THE veteran officer behind the wheel of a police car which crashed at Yallah killing student officer Robert Brotherson has pleaded guilty to negligent driving occasioning death. Warilla police officer Greg Callander's guilty plea in Wollongong Local Court took the Director of Public Prosecutions' (DPP) team by surprise. Callander, 44, and the 29-year-old trainee were taking part in a police

operation on January 24 last year when their vehicle spun out of control and collided with a truck on the F6 at Yallah. Mr Brotherson, a father of two from Oak Flats, was in the back seat of the car. He was critically injured and died eight days later in hospital.

The DPP was in court yesterday to apply for an adjournment of a hearing set down for March 3.

Magistrate Paul Johnson had already refused a request for an adjournment last month, saying delaying the hearing until after a coronial inquest (as the DPP had requested)

would enormously disadvantage the defendant.

The DPP's Sharon Harris had argued then that important information could come out at the inquest, but Mr Johnson said if the DPP wished

CONTINUED PAGE 2

## Officer admits his guilt

FROM PAGE 1

it could still lay the more serious charge of dangerous driving occasioning death before the hearing.

Mr Johnson formally recorded a conviction yesterday, noting that Callander had been advised this was a case where a Section 10 (in which a conviction is not recorded) would be reasonable.

He set the matter down for sentence on March 3 and said it would be better if a magistrate other than from Wollongong handled it. "I certainly would not feel comfortable doing it," he said.

Mr Brotherson's parents were in court. His wife Melissa was not but spoke to the Mercury afterwards.

She said she would have preferred the inquest to have been concluded before the summary matter was dealt with. "But from our perspective, it's a result. And any result is better than no result."

MERCURY FEB SAT 22-2-2003



GREG CALLANDER

# Police widow's plea



MR BROTHERSON

By JENNY DENNIS

IN the 12 months since Melissa Brotherson's trainee police officer husband Robert died, the 23-year-old mother of two has had to fight more battles than most people face in a lifetime.

Now she's battling the police insurance company Zurich, which is yet to pay out on the policy under which her husband was covered.

Robert Brotherson was just 29 when he died in hospital from head injuries sustained when the police car in which he was a back-seat passenger collided with a truck on the P8 at Yallah on January 24.

Veteran cop Greg Callan

## Pay up on my husband's policy

der was at the wheel that day and has since pleaded guilty to negligent driving occasioning death. He will be sentenced on Monday.

By her own account, it's been "a bummer of a year" for Mrs Brotherson.

Before she was widowed, she was planning to do an arts-law degree at the University of Wollongong. She and her husband had also drawn up plans to renovate their home at Oak Flats.

All this changed however on February 1, when Mr Brotherson lost his eight-day battle for life.

She has withdrawn from

her course at the university, and recently sold their home at Oak Flats.

"It was all too much," she said yesterday. "I was supposed to start law this year and I did try, but the stress was too much."

As for the renovation, it was Mr Brotherson who was "the handy one" and without him she didn't have the heart to continue.

She and her sons will probably move in with her mother, in the hope that it won't be too much longer before Zurich gets back to her.

For the time being she's

managing on a \$20,000-a-year single parent's pension.

Soon after her husband died, Mrs Brotherson lodged a third party motor accident claim. There's since been an offer of \$320,000 "to settle things" but she rejected this. "It was like a slap in the face," she said. "Rob was only 29 when he died. We expected him to come out of the (police) academy on about \$40,000."

Since then she's been working to provide the paperwork demanded by the insurer.

First they wanted her employment records going

back a decade. "Ten years ago I was 12," she said. Then they wanted her medical records over the past 10 years.

As soon as she'd managed to get these together they demanded her past three years' tax returns.

"It seems every time you provide what they ask, they think of something else," she said.

The Mercury contacted Zurich and a spokesman said while he could not comment on individual cases, delays occurred in finalising matters for a variety of reasons.

"However, having said that, we will now look into the individual case and do what we can," he said.



## A widow waits in hope

PAGE 3

MERCURY P1 FR 28-2-2003

Long wait: Melissa Brotherson and her two sons, Blake, 3, and Ewen, 2, are still waiting for an insurance payout more than 12 months after her police trainee husband was killed. Picture: DAVID TEASE

MERCURY P9 MON 29-7-2002

**BIG DRAWCARD:** Deputy Commissioner Dave Madden, Assistant Commissioner Terry Collins, Big Brother's Peter Corbett, Mog Corbett, Constable Brad Reh and Chief Inspector Charles Pasfield at the 17th annual Police Charity Ball.

Picture: SOPHIA MARELL



## Big Brother Pete helps out police

Despite having "four left feet" Big Brother winner Peter Corbett dazzled guests at the Illawarra Police Charity Ball.

It was his humility and charm rather than his dancing skills that won the hearts of even the most hardened copper at the annual fundraising event. More than \$5000 was donated to Police Legacy and the Ewan and Blake Brotherson trust fund. Their father Robert, a student police officer, was killed when the police car in which he was a passenger collided with a truck.

Mr Corbett, who lost both his parents within a year of each other, jumped at the chance to be the ball's guest of honour.

"Police Legacy is a very worthy cause. The last thing you want to be thinking about (when a parent passes away) is finance, but of course that's the first issue that comes up," he said.



# A brother is lost but not forgotten

On the 6th of February 2002 a terribly sad event took place in Wollongong. The funeral of a student in the Constable's Education Program, who was undertaking a work placement, was conducted with full Police Honours.

Robert Brotherson was only 29 years old, leaving behind a wife and two small children. He battled valiantly to overcome the injuries he received in a motor vehicle collision during his work placement.

It was especially pleasing to see that this funeral, with full honours, was afforded to a person who had, along with his family, made many sacrifices in his endeavours to become a Police Officer.

During the funeral an Honour Guard was formed to pay the respects of all Police for this young man. No one will forget the demonstration of leadership by Senior Deputy Commissioner Moroney as he and the Minister for Police, Michael Costa, joined the Honour Guard in heavy rain. Leadership is about doing things that you are prepared to do yourself. Life Member Moroney demonstrated that leadership at this funeral.

This terrible collision highlights a number of issues in terms of Policing and those people engaged in Policing. It highlighted firstly, that in this moment of adversity, Police continued to demonstrate the best parts of their culture, regardless that Bob Brotherson had not been sworn in. Secondly, it highlights the sacrifices people are prepared to make in pursuit of their desire to be sworn Police. Finally, it demonstrates that significant change is required in terms of coverage for those aspiring Police Officers who are required to undertake field placements.

It also highlights the need for this organisation and other similar organisations, to be given compulsory face-to-face access to all recruits entering Policing.

Fortunately, Bob Brotherson had become a member of this organisation. The Police Provident Fund, Police Legacy and those similar welfare based, 'police family' organisations, have to be able to immediately represent anyone who is placed into a position of policing.

**"Leadership is about doing things that you are prepared to do yourself."**

One can only hope that the Police Force, and those who administer it, come to realise this sooner rather than later. This is a question of humanity and compassion, rather than this organisation merely seeking Members. Quite the reverse, it is imperative that small children and their mothers are able to immediately access the Police welfare infrastructure in order that they may make the best of their tragic circumstances.

One can only hope that Bob Brotherson has been sworn in wherever he may have gone. Let's just hope that he knows we are all thinking of him and his family and the importance of them being looked after. All our families are at least entitled to know, that in such terrible circumstances, that we all confront daily in our working lives, that such will be the case.

*The views expressed in this article are the author's own.*

## advertiser news



Gary Hodsdon and Cathy Briggs joined Blake and Ewan Brotherson to promote an auction night in aid of the Blake and Ewan Brotherson Trust Fund at Warilla Bowls and Recreation Club on April 19. Picture: GREG TOTMAN

## Night to help young boys

By NATHAN SIMPSON

A special fund-raising night in aid of Blake and Ewan Brotherson - sons of Robert Brotherson who was killed in a police motor vehicle accident - will be held on April 19.

Mr Brotherson - a field placement at the Lake Illawarra Local Area Command - died from injuries he received in February.

Funds raised from the auction night will go directly to the Blake & Ewan Brotherson Trust Fund Committee. It will be held at the Warilla Bowls and Recreation Club.

Lake Illawarra Local Area manager Jan Dowell said Mr Brotherson was well-respected among his peers.

"There has already been a very generous response from individuals and business wishing to contribute to the benefit night with many valuable prizes being donated to the committee, including some great sporting memorabilia," she said.

"Those unable to attend on the night can still contribute by purchasing raffle tickets or making a cash donation to the Blake and Ewan Brotherson Trust Fund.

"This way they can still be a factor in the lives of the young boys, whose father died trying to help this community."

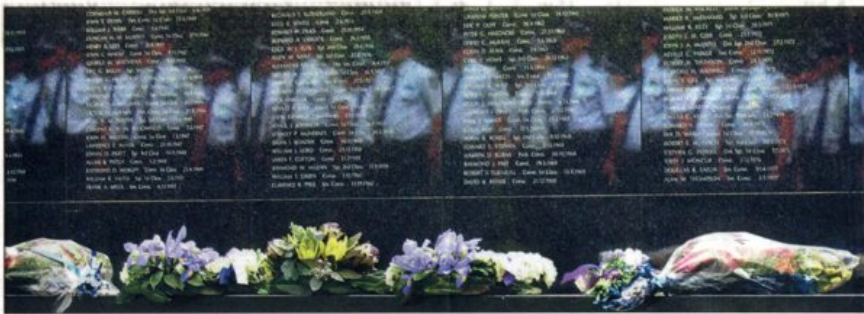
Items to be auctioned on the night include a cricket bat signed by the Australian one-day team, signed shirt from the Wollongong Wolves and Wollongong Hawks, limited edition framed print of The Don (Bradman) with certificate of authenticity, and numerous framed and signed rugby league jumpers from NRL clubs including St George-Illawarra. Other items include limited edition racing prints of Octagonal and Saintly, as well as the use of a sponsors box at Stadium Australia for a Dragons home game.

A major raffle will also be held featuring holiday, electrical appliances, car stereo and jewellery.

Mr Brotherson left behind wife Melissa and two sons Blake, 2, and Ewan, 1.

The auction night will be held on April 19 (7pm-midnight). Tickets \$25. Phone 4295 2631.

THE ADVERTISER  
MARCH 3-5 2002



Poignant... the flowers placed yesterday along the Wall of Remembrance beneath the names of police who died in the line of duty.

PHOTO: CRAIG GREENHILL

# 242 officers who will not be forgotten

DAILY TELEGRAPH Pt 4 TUE 30-9-2003

By ANGELA KAMPER  
Police Reporter



IN a poignant reminder that police work never ends, the sound of bagpipes playing in honour of 242 officers who died in the line of duty was broken by sirens yesterday.

For the first time, Police Remembrance Day began with a march from Government House to the Wall of Remembrance in The Domain, where relatives of the fallen officers laid wreaths beneath the long list of names etched in stone.

Sam Oakley, the son of Detective Constable David Oakley who died in August 1990 after being injured during an arrest, laid a wreath under his father's name with Police Commissioner Ken Moroney by his side.

"I think that he died doing something he loved and I'm extremely proud of the way that he did it," 14-year-old Sam said. "I want to be a police officer for the same reason."

Amanda Mahon, the fiancée of Constable Glenn McEnalley who died after being shot several times as he followed a stolen car 18 months ago, said part of her still found it hard to believe he was gone, but the support from police and the community had helped her deal with the grief.

"I've found a lot of comfort in knowing that Glenn's death wasn't in vain," she said.

The ceremony continued at Pitt St's Uniting Church. On a white table at the centre of the chapel a candle was lit for every Australian officer who died on duty in the last 12 months at home and

also in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, where police are serving.

Next to the candles was a bowl of salt water symbolising the tears that have been shed over their deaths.

Detective Senior Constable Dave Mackie lit a candle for his wife, Constable Kylie Smith, who was killed in a car accident in February on her way to work. He had their three-year-old daughter Rita by his side.

Rita was given a \$5000 scholarship yesterday by NSW Police and Police Legacy.

The police parade along Macquarie St was led by Acting Deputy Commissioner Dick Adams, along with motorcycle and mounted police, decorated officers, family members and support groups.

NSW Governor Marie Bashir addressed police during a break in the march outside Parliament House.

More pictures online  
[dailytelegraph.com.au](http://dailytelegraph.com.au)



In step... a young boy during the Police Remembrance Day march yesterday.

«Every single police officer who has lost his or her life in this way, in service, protecting home and hearth, highway, land and shore represents a major loss to everyone of us.»

— Governor Marie Bashir  
«I've found a lot of comfort in knowing that Glenn's death wasn't in vain.»

— Amanda Mahon, fiancée of slain Constable Glenn McEnalley

«It was something that he always wanted to do, unfortunately he didn't get to do it long enough»  
— Donna Wilson, sister of student police officer Robert Brotherson, killed in a car crash

«Kylie, she was just natural, and could handle any situation with a big smile. She was a beautiful person inside and out»

— Senior Constable Dave Mackie, husband of Constable Kylie Smith, killed in a car crash

«I think that he died doing something he loved and I'm extremely proud of the way that he did it»

— Sam Oakley, son of Detective Constable David Oakley, who died after being injured during an arrest

Mercury News

# Fatal crash recreated for inquest

MERCURY P15 THU 25-9-2003

By ERIN O'DWYER

THE widow of a police trainee killed in a car crash last year wept as a reconstruction of the incident was played to the NSW Coroner's Court yesterday.

Mel Brotherson and her family have been attending the inquest, which yesterday saw video footage shot from inside a police car travelling the same route as the car in which Robert Brotherson was killed.

A voice-over by police investigators indicated the vehicle's speed and noted heavy rain conditions were similar to those on the day of the incident. The car travelled through Warilla and Yallah along the Princes Hwy and on to the crash scene at the corner of Emerson Rd, Dapto.

Mr Brotherson, 29, was a back-seat passenger in a car which aquaplaned on the wet road then smashed into an oncoming truck in January last year.

The driver of the vehicle, 45-year-old police officer Greg Callander, in March pleaded guilty to negligent driving causing death and was sentenced to 12 months' jail. Last month he lost an appeal in Wollongong District Court, but his non-parole period was reduced from nine to six months.

The court heard Callander had no



MRS BROTHERSON

longer been on urgent duty at the time of the accident but had been speeding 10km/h above the legal limit despite heavy rain at the time.

The inquest, which began on Tuesday, also saw video footage of the police car, which sustained significant rear end damage in the crash.

The inquest heard that the exact cause of the crash could not be determined but the car lost front wheel traction due to total or partial aquaplaning caused by water on the road.

The inquest is continuing.

# Coroner urges law reform

MERCURY P7 FRI 26-9-2003

By MICHELE TYDD

STATE Coroner John Abernathy has called for law reform after handing down findings in the inquest into the death of a Wollongong student police officer.

He said that because of action taken by the Department of Public Prosecutions his role was limited to a formal finding of the cause of death and recommendations.

Mr Abernathy found Robert Edwin Brotherson died on February 1, 2002 at Wollongong Hospital of multiple injuries sustained on January

24 on the F8 near Dapto when the vehicle in which he was a passenger and a truck collided. He also found the vehicle was being driven on urgent duty by Gregory John Callander, an officer of the NSW police.

The accident had happened after Callander had been sent out to a "persons trapped" accident near the Kanahooka overpass at 7.08 pm.

In March, Callander, 45, pleaded guilty to negligent driving causing death and was sentenced to 12 months' jail.

In evidence yesterday, Callander said he was not aware

it was the Police Department's Safe Driving Policy that student officers should not be taken on urgent duty call-outs.

Under cross-examination by counsel assisting the coroner Peter Zahra SC, Callander maintained he had "driven to the best of my ability".

He said a pool of water on the freeway rather than speed had been the cause of the accident. He believed he had been driving at 100 km/h - no more than 110km/h.

Mr Abernathy said the question of whether or not

there was sufficient evidence to satisfy a jury that a known person had committed an indictable offence had been taken out of his hands by the DPP when it summarily charged Callander.

He said he would like to see the NSW Government consider this issue and make the legislative change necessary to enable coroners to conduct their roles properly.

On the issue of whether Callander had been on urgent duty, the evidence suggested that he had been permitted to continue, despite receiving advice on police radio that

there were no longer persons trapped.

"That advice was unconfirmed and in those circumstances it seems to be a matter for the judgment of the police officer engaged in the call-out," Mr Abernathy said.

On the issue of whether Callander had driven dangerously, Mr Abernathy said the test was objective.

"Would the prudent driver have driven as the defendant did in those circumstances? ... I would have to say this case does not appear to be the strongest of those I have considered."

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## Police Remembrance Day: 30 years

Nan Tien Temple, Berkeley, NSW

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## Police Remembrance Day:

JOSHUA BUTLER

29 Sep 2014, 3 p.m.



Family members lay a wreath for Robert Edwin Brotherson. Picture: ANDY ZAKELI

Almost 60 years on, Kenneth Nash still misses his uncle Allen.

Sergeant Allen William Nash, aged 40, was killed in the line of duty by a gun-wielding offender at Primbee in 1956.

Sgt Nash was one of eight officers stationed in the Lake Illawarra local area command who were recognised with memorial plaques on a wall of honour outside Lake Illawarra police station on Monday, as part of Police Remembrance Day commemorations.

Dozens of current and retired officers, families, friends, politicians, councillors and members of the public gathered at Oak Flats for a ceremony to unveil the memorial wall, and honour past and present officers.

Since 1862, more than 250 NSW Police officers have died in the line of duty.

<http://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/2591540/lake-illawarra-officers-honoured-on-police-remembrance-day-photos/>

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## Honouring the fallen

By DANIELLE CETINSKI

March 19, 2014, midnight



Police officer Robert Brotherson was killed in 2002. Lake Illawarra Police are creating a memorial wall in his and other fallen officers' honours. Pictured are Melissa Brotherson and her sons Ewan and Blake. Picture: ALBEY BOND

AN adventurous young man who wanted to help people will be one of eight officers acknowledged on Police Remembrance Day, when a memorial wall is unveiled in their honour at Lake Illawarra Police Station.

Robert Brotherson from Oak Flats was working in a cake shop with his parents in 2001 when he and his wife, Melissa, decided he would follow his dream to be a police officer.

But the dream was cut short on February 1, 2002, when the student officer was critically injured in a collision between a police car and a truck.

His life support was turned off eight days later.

The 29-year-old left behind two young sons, Blake and Ewan, who are now 14 and 13.

Melissa Brotherson said she was pleased Lake Illawarra Police had decided to recognise the eight officers.

“A lot of people don’t realise that our local police take risks to protect the community,” she said.

“That Rob was a student police officer makes it even more special – the fact that the police family still honours someone just at the start of their career.”

Ms Brotherson remembered her late husband as an “old-fashioned gentleman” who did not shy away from a skydive or a bungy jump.

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“He had a sense of compassion and empathy – he was the type of kid to take in a hurt animal and that extended to people,” she said.

“He wasn’t there [in the police force] for the glory, he wanted to help people.”

The command area has lost eight officers since 1951, either while on duty or as a result of injuries sustained on the job.

An outdoor commemorative plaque will be unveiled on Police Remembrance Day, September 29, and the station flag will be lowered to half-mast.

Along with Mr Brotherson, police will remember Constable Peter Carter who was killed in 1988, Detective Constable Steven Tier (1985), Constable Peter Hardacre (1962), Constable Francis Burke (1961), Sergeant Allen Nash (1956), Sergeant William Smith (1951) and Constable Frederick McLaughlan, who was medically discharged in 1930 and died in 1938.

Lake Illawarra Local Area Commander Wayne Starling encouraged families of the fallen to come forward so they could be invited to the ceremony and contribute photographs for the display.

Family members can contact Sergeant Jason Harrison on 4232 5326 or email [HARR2JAS@police.nsw.gov.au](mailto:HARR2JAS@police.nsw.gov.au).

They can also send a personal message via the Lake Illawarra Local Area Command's Eyewatch page on Facebook by visiting [facebook.com/LakeIllawarraLAC](https://www.facebook.com/LakeIllawarraLAC).

<http://www.kiamaindependent.com.au/story/2155913/honouring-the-fallen/>

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## **In memory of Illawarra heroes in blue**

DOMINIC GEIGER

**Sept. 27, 2013, 9:24 p.m**

Every day, police officers go to work with the knowledge they may not be going home to their families.

In 2002, 29-year-old student police officer **Robert Brotherson** died while responding to a car crash in the Illawarra.

On Friday, his son, 13-year-old **Blake Brotherson** from Oak Flats, was named the **2013 winner** of the **NSW Police Legacy Commissioner's Scholarship**.

Presented by Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione as part of the **Police Remembrance Day** ceremony in Sydney, the scholarship provided **\$5000** to allow the **year 7 student** to follow his dreams to become a **pilot**.

At the time of his death, Robert Brotherson had successfully completed **session one** at the **Police Academy** and was undertaking **field placement** at Lake Illawarra Local Area

Command.

Presenting the award, Mr Scipione said Blake was an active participant in Police Legacy activities and wished him luck for his future.

Meantime in Wollongong, a multi-denominational Police Remembrance Day service was held at St Francis Xavier's Cathedral.

For Inspector Anne Clarke, the ceremony was a stark reminder of the risks she and her fellow officers faced.

"It brings home to us the real danger of policing," she said.

More than that, Insp Clarke said the ceremony was an example of the tremendous camaraderie that existed among those who made up the thin blue line.

Although Police Remembrance Day exists to pay respect to those officers who have been killed in the line of duty, it also honours those who have died in the past 12 months while still employed with the force.

This was particularly poignant for Wollongong LAC, which has lost two former officers in the past two months – Chief Inspector **Graeme Donnelly** and Sergeant **Nick Skomarow**. More than 100 officers, members of the public and religious representatives attended the ceremony, conducted by Salvation Army chaplain **Jayne Wilson**.

<http://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/1806923/in-memory-of-illawarra-heroes-in-blue/>

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# Police Legacy Stories – Mel



<https://www.australianpolice.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Police-Legacy-Stories-Mel.mp4>

**Published on Aug 1, 2016**

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