A logo with swans and a checkered pattern

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First National Police Legacy Day celebrates life-changing work

15 June, 2025

-EMBARGOED UNTIL 6AM SUNDAY 15 JUNE, 2025-

Ayden Blanchard was just 12 when his police officer Dad took his own life while on duty. WA Police Legacy provided vital support to Ayden and his family, and now he is proudly following in his father’s footsteps, having graduated from the Police Academy in March. He’s now Probationary Constable Ayden Blanchard.

Ayden is telling his story for the first time as part of the inaugural National Police Legacy Day, which is this Tuesday, 17 June.

Ayden plans to mark the occasion by visiting his father’s plaque at the Police Academy in Joondalup.

Police Legacy organisations provide support to police and their families, often after the loss of a loved one.

Detective Sergeant Scott Blanchard had served 20 years as a police officer in Western Australia and had been with the Gang Crime Squad for about three years when he died in 2015.

He left behind his wife, Justine, their two children, Ayden and Miranda, and his son, Jarrod Coles.

Scott’s widow, Justine, said WA Police Legacy was there almost immediately after his passing.

“Police Legacy was here right from the start the, I think it was the third day the chaplain came, and then the manager from Police Legacy came and said, ‘We're here for you, if you need anything, help with bills, kids’ school fees, if you want to go away (on holiday)’, so they're really, really good,” Justine, 51, said.

As well as dealing with shock and grief after Scott’s death, the family faced additional challenges.

“Scott was the main breadwinner, I just worked casually at a school, and I didn't have many hours, so it was very tough at the start,” Justine explained.

“I had to pause mortgage payments until things were sorted. And Police Legacy came to the rescue a few times, with some payments for things and a couple of bills. And then, over the years, they helped a lot, just trying to help us get away from everything. We had a few trips to Broome, a couple of trips to Kununurra, visiting other police friends that we've got around WA,” Justine said.

WA Police Legacy funded those trips.

Ayden and Miranda also attended Police Legacy camps.

“Being that young and then going on that camp, it just really made me realise there are other people like me out there, and I'm not alone,” Ayden said.

“Your world is shattered, and you just think, ‘Oh, who am I?’, ‘Why has this happened to me?’ And then it gets put into perspective for you. And you just realise, okay, I can do this. There are other kids out there going through the same thing,” Ayden said.

Becoming a police officer himself had been at the back of Ayden’s mind for some time, but it was when he read the Coroner’s Court of Western Australia’s Inquest Findings from 2018 into his father’s death that he became certain of his future.

“I'd say it was bubbling away at the back (of my mind). And I had the previous two Police Commissioners both say, ‘You are always welcome to join the job,’ and ‘We'd love to have you.’ And Dad’s friends always said, ‘Yeah, go for it’,” Ayden said.

“Then, when I actually read my dad's coroner's report in about 2024, that kind of kickstarted it. I hadn't read it until that day, and then when I read it, it just made me want to follow in his footsteps,” Ayden said.

When Ayden graduated from the Police Academy in March as Probationary Constable Ayden Blanchard, it was an emotional day with lots of supporters – including his dad’s friends and colleagues – cheering him on.

Ayden’s Mum was there, along with Scott’s mother and Justine’s mother (Ayden’s two Grandmothers).

Scott’s brother and sister attended to watch their nephew carry on the policing tradition their brother had started many years earlier.

“I nearly cried. I was tearing up, and I was trying to hold it in. I was trying not to cry. I was just so happy. And I was feeling very proud as well,” Ayden said.

“I'm just proud he's followed in his dad's footsteps; it was a very proud day,” Justine said.

The support WA Police Legacy provides to the Blanchard family is ongoing.

“We go to the bingo days and all the lovely things like lunches and river cruises. We've been on all those sorts of things. The kids have come to quite a few things. It's just lovely. All these events. We all catch up (with other Police Legatees),” Justine said.

Ayden is already raising awareness about Police Legacy’s work amongst his colleagues.

“When I tell them my story (about how Police Legacy has helped me), they say, ‘Oh, that's definitely worth more than five bucks’. They’re saying that they'll donate more. Any sort of education that you can give to officers or the public is just great,” he said.

Police officers can choose to make a small voluntary regular payroll deduction to help fund WA Police Legacy’s work.

WA Police Legacy was established in 1992.

WA Police Legacy support services range from social activities to education, career and holiday grants, providing comfort, connection, and practical assistance to families.

WA Executive Manager Kelly Bradley spoke about the significance of National Police Legacy Day.

“We hope that through National Police Legacy Day we can celebrate and highlight the life-changing work being done by Police Legacy organisations around the country,” Ms Bradley said.

“The mission of Police Legacy is not only to honour the memory of those who served, but to ensure that the lives of those they leave behind are not defined by tragedy, but shaped by hope, resilience, and possibility.”

Assistant Minister for Productivity, Competition, Charities and Treasury the Hon Andrew Leigh MP officially launched National Police Legacy Day at Parliament House in Canberra.

“When tragedy strikes, Police Legacy is there – not just in the immediate aftermath, but in the months and years that follow. It provides emotional support, financial assistance, and – just as importantly – a deep sense of ongoing connection. These organisations check in, stay close, and remind families that they remain part of something larger,” Assistant Minister Leigh said.

The logo for National Police Legacy Day is inspired by the Michaelmas daisy. The Michaelmas daisy is the flower of St Michael, the patron saint of police who protects those who have sworn to serve and remembers those no longer with us. We are proud to call it the Police Legacy Daisy.

For more information visit www.policelegacywa.org.au

If you or someone you know needs help, call Lifeline 13 11 14. Beyond Blue is available to speak 24/7 on 1300 22 4636. If someone’s life is in immediate danger, call 000.

-Ends-

***Full media kit containing photos and video available at: www.npld.org.au***

**Note for editors**

* June 17 is the anniversary date of when the first Police Legacy organisation was established in Australia. Queensland Police Legacy started on 17 June, 1971. Each state and territory now has its own Police Legacy charity.
* National Police Legacy Day is a day of celebration of the work of Police Legacy charities. It is separate from Police Remembrance Day, which is a day of mourning and reflection.