

Give new cops our respect

Paul Nicolaou



Premier Chris Minns spoke for all of us at the Goulburn police academy recently when he saluted the bravery of our police, especially after the deadly Bondi Beach terrorist attack.

Class 369's graduation ceremony was an opportunity for the Premier to reflect the community's respect for the force. There was much more to his speech than the brief but powerful grab we saw on the nightly news.

The newly graduated constables, he noted, had each committed to policing after the December 14 attack, fully aware of the inherent risks. Their vow to protect and serve could also risk their own lives. He referred to an earlier graduation ceremony where he had met a 22-year-old probationary constable named

Jack Hibbert.

Four months into his career, Jack and fellow officer Scott Dyson were on patrol at Bondi Beach, when as gunfire erupted, they ran toward danger. Both were shot and seriously injured.

"Now officers, I don't say all of this to warn you off or give you doubts at the start of your career or to worry your mothers or your fathers," Mr Minns told Class 369.

"When people are confused, terrified or worried, they don't look to politicians or to political leaders, they look for the blue uniform of the NSW Police."

NSW has Australia's oldest and largest police force with 17,000 sworn officers, but is still short of an authorised strength of 18,000.

We live in troubled times and our police, experienced officers and newly graduated "probies",

deserve our utmost respect.

Police Commissioner Mal Lanyon also struck the right note in telling the graduates: "You have chosen a career that demands courage, discipline and integrity. I am confident you have the personal qualities that will enable you to take on your roles with humility, integrity and strength."

Whenever we have the chance, let our police officers know how much we value them as people and as our defenders and protectors.

We could start by watching Class 369's full graduation ceremony on YouTube.

Paul Nicolaou is executive director of Business Sydney