

~~capital of our state and despite having regional Australia's most diverse and robust economy, we do not command a position on the national weather map. This is a disgrace and must be fixed.~~

Mr Crandon: It is outrageous.

Mr CRISAFULLI: It is. If we are to grow a four pillar economy, we need to take every opportunity to promote our state's largest northern centre to show we are open for business. This is not a Townsville verse Cairns battle. Our cities have moved on from that nonsense. Despite being smaller than Townsville, Cairns rightly deserves its place on the national weather map because of its vital role in Australia's tourism industry, but so too does Townsville. We have earned that right. We have transformed a once dry and dusty frontier town, known as Brownsville, into a thriving commercial centre. Almost 200,000 people now call Townsville home, while many of the towns from the Cape to Rockhampton and out to the Isa do business in our town every day. We have a waterfront that is the envy of many larger Australian cities, and with community facilities like Riverway, a new look city heart and the myriad of public parks we are now a desirable place to live.

As the proud home to three successful national sporting teams, passionate host of a round of the V8 Supercars and birthplace of the highly regarded Australian Festival of Chamber Music, we are a city commanding interest from television viewers across the country and, indeed, the world. It is great to have in the chamber my good friend the member for Townsville; it is not so great to have my good friend the member for Coomera here beside me. We wear our relationship with the Australian Defence Force as a badge of honour and are now the posting of choice for defence families, while our educational institutions are led by the revered James Cook University.

This has been a battle I have fought for many years. I have written letters to TV executives, I have lobbied federal and state politicians, I have even run lengthy radio campaigns with my good mates CK and Blake from Mix 106. OMG! Won't someone please take notice of Townsville? In the past I have been told by TV executives, 'It is unfortunate to view a city's strength as linked to its position on a weather map'. That is not unfortunate; it is reality. The argument that the map will become cluttered is a nonsense. There are around 350 kilometres between Townsville and Cairns. They have no dramas fitting in Canberra and Sydney, which is over 50 kilometres closer. Like Sydney and Canberra, Townsville and Cairns are vastly different cities with vastly different weather patterns. There is room for us both. Townsville is a city that has worked hard to put itself on the nation's economic map. It is time we took our place on the nation's weather map as well.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order! Before calling the Leader of the Opposition, I recognise in the public gallery Mr Bill Newton, the previous member for Glass House and Caboolture.

MULTICULTURAL RECOGNITION BILL

Introduction



Ms PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.35 pm.): I present a bill for an act to provide for a Multicultural Queensland Charter, a Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council and a multicultural action plan and for related purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Health and Community Services Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Multicultural Recognition Bill 2012.

Tabled paper: Multicultural Recognition Bill 2012, explanatory notes.

As the former minister for transport and multicultural affairs, I was appalled to learn from the assistant minister and member for Brisbane Central, Mr Robert Cavallucci, that the LNP government has not taken up the cause of Queensland's multicultural community by re-introducing this important piece of legislation, which lapsed at the end of the last parliamentary term. The philosophy behind this bill is fundamental: Queensland's multicultural community is vibrant and important and valuable. It is a community that deserves the recognition of us all. The Labor Party reflects that and recognises it with the reintroduction of this bill.

This bill builds on our strong multicultural policy of 'A multicultural future for all of us'. The policy was formulated after extensive consultations with more than 1,300 participants from Cairns to the Gold Coast, from Mount Isa to Gladstone, who attended 31 community forums held right across the state. By refusing to take up the cause, this LNP government has in turn refused to recognise our multicultural community. That is not only disturbing; it is discourteous and offensive.

We already know that the LNP does not care about Queensland's multicultural community with the recent service cuts experienced by organisations such as the Multicultural Community Centre Ltd, Access Community Services, the Multicultural Development Association, the Migrant Centre Organisation and others. Those organisations provide critical services to refugees and newly arrived migrants to help them with improved language and employment skills. The cold hearted members opposite choose to repay those services by slashing them.

These cuts, along with the contempt with which the LNP has approached the implementation of Queensland's multicultural policy, is a worrying step backwards for this great state and the diverse communities that make up our society. Labor will always stand up for equality, Labor will always stand up for opportunity and Labor will always stand up for fairness, including supporting our multicultural communities.

Government members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order!

Ms PALASZCZUK: One of my proudest moments in the House was when I introduced the Multicultural Recognition Bill. Why did we do it? Because people have come from all parts of the world and have contributed to building our great state of Queensland. They have contributed from all different walks of life. There was extensive consultation on the bill. The ability to consult with people is something that this government fundamentally lacks. We have seen that with the job slashing that is happening under this government.

The Multicultural Recognition Bill act was consulted on at length. Community consultations were held right across the state which I attended. It was one of the proudest moments of my life when I stood in this chamber and I stood up for multiculturalism. What have we heard from those opposite? At the India Day Fair held recently recognising Indian independence I heard the assistant minister very clearly say that this government had absolutely no intention of reintroducing this bill. That is what he told me; that the LNP government had washed its hands when it came to recognising multiculturalism in this great state.

Labor will stand up for multiculturalism. My grandparents came to this country from war-torn Germany as Polish migrants with absolutely nothing and they built a life here. I am proud of the sacrifices they have made because I would not be standing in this House without the sacrifices that they and many thousands of other migrants have made. This is a chance for all members of the House to stand up for multiculturalism; to stand up for what they believe in. This will be a fundamental test for this LNP government. Does it support multiculturalism or is it washing its hands of it? The minister is here in the chamber this afternoon. I challenge the minister: will he support this piece of legislation or not?

I am not going to rush this piece of legislation through. I am going to ask the committee for at least two months consultation. Do honourable members hear that? Not a week, not four days, not seven days, not 10 days—I am going to ask the committee to consider this over a two-month period. That is going to be a final decision for the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, but this is an important piece of work. I am going to stand up for it. The Labor Party is going to stand up for it. We will wait and see what the LNP has to say about it.

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First Reading

Ms PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.42 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Health and Community Services Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Health and Community Services Committee.

~~PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS~~

~~Surf Life Saving Queensland, Point Danger Branch~~



~~**Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (2.42 pm): I welcome to the gallery the Elanora State School grade 7 group. The 2011-12 period was the 88th season of volunteer lifesaving patrols for the Surf Life Saving Queensland's Point Danger Branch. There are 11 affiliated clubs in the branch, and I am proud to say that the Currumbin electorate is home to eight of these great clubs.~~

~~The mission of the Point Danger Branch is to deliver high quality, innovative, progressive and responsive lifesaving services. For decades they have delivered this and more for residents and visitors to the southern Gold Coast. Reading the 2011-12 annual report revealed some truly commendable results. I wish to congratulate everyone involved in the branch for their selfless and dedicated efforts. In particular, I acknowledge branch president Mal Barnes and branch manager Kerrie Barnes for their longstanding and unwavering commitment to surf lifesaving.~~