



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

---

Hansard 18 November 1998

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT Multicultural Service Awards

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.35 a.m.), by leave: This week, I was privileged, along with my Parliamentary Secretary, Gordon Nuttall, and a number of members of this Parliament to listen to the stories of 10 award-winning Queenslanders. They had several things in common. They had all worked long hours for the benefit of others. They had worked voluntarily—for no benefit of their own, other than the satisfaction of doing a worthwhile job. They had all made consistent and outstanding contributions to bringing people together. They have one more thing in common, Mr Speaker, as you know because you were present. They are all winners of the 1998 Queensland Multicultural Service Awards.

Hundreds of people applauded their stories. But as with most good news stories, their stories went untold on the front page and the 6 o'clock news. Only SBS was there to report the rewarding of these people who had contributed so much to the way in which we enjoy our unity and our diversity. Unity—because with about 120 different ethnic backgrounds, 57 major languages and 43 religions, we are all proud to be Queenslanders. I emphasise that as the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. Diversity—because we are all able to celebrate our different cultures and backgrounds. In other places, diversity like that has sometimes led to tension and even to out-and-out conflict, but not in Queensland and not in Australia, because we are very lucky here.

Despite what recent political events in Queensland may suggest to onlookers, the great majority of us in this State welcome the differences, the diversity and the colour that all these different backgrounds bring to our society. In recent times, we have all had to face ugly challenges to the idea of multiculturalism. I have stated very clearly my Government's commitment to multiculturalism. We have had to work harder than ever before to foster knowledge, understanding and acceptance.

These 10 volunteers and all the others whose names were put forward for the awards have helped to build better community relations and a more cohesive society in our State—a society of tolerance and understanding. I pay tribute to those winners today. They were Margaret Blackman, Barbara Damska, John David, Peter Chung-Tung Huang, George Kotzas, Jeanne Mok, Shifa Mustapha, Margaret Raymond, Lawrence Rosenblum and Vilaseri Tuicolo. I also congratulate the Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre for winning the inaugural award for organisations.

At the presentations which I made, I also announced that there will be a new schools category in next year's awards. This category will be for a primary and a secondary school which have substantially improved multicultural aspects of their policies, curricula and activities. Not only that, but I can also announce the Premier's slogan competition for primary students. This great initiative grew out of the Trade and Tourism Summit my Government held in July. The competition will invite primary students to come up with a slogan to encourage fellow Queenslanders to give a big welcome to overseas visitors to the State. We need to ensure that the warmth and unity which these award winners have contributed to is communicated to our guests—wherever they may come from. I table for the information of members a copy of a brochure which sets out the competition for primary schools and the details. I urge members to urge their schools to participate in this competition.

---