



Speech by

**Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE**

**MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE**

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Hansard 30 May 2000

**FIJI**

**Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE** (Surfers Paradise—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.48 a.m.): I welcome the opportunity to associate the Opposition with the comments made by the Premier and the Government this morning and to reaffirm the bipartisan support of this Parliament for the actions that have been taken by the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs in regard to the crisis in Fiji.

So often in this country we take so much for granted. We play our politics hard and we have a robust democracy. But we play our politics in this place, not on the streets and not with violence. I believe it is a great tragedy if, anywhere in the world, a democratically elected Prime Minister is removed from office by the barrel of a gun held by a group of thugs who seek to subvert the outcome of an election and a democratic process based on a constitution that was embraced by, as I understand it, the vast majority of the Fijian people.

We hope and pray that there will be a resolution to the crisis in Fiji. We hope that it will come quickly and that Fiji will be able to regain its position of respect within the Commonwealth and within the great forum of democratic nations around the world. I think it is fair to say that Australia and Fiji have had a special relationship over a long period of time. The simple reality is that what has occurred there is no good for anyone anywhere. It is tragic for Fiji; it is tragic for the Fijian people. We hope that the situation will be resolved and that we will see the restoration of full democracy in that country as soon as possible. I know that all honourable members in this place trust that the representations being made by the Federal Government will be successful. We hope that wise counsel will prevail in Fiji and that democracy and commonsense can be restored and that political thuggery and political terrorism will be rejected, and rejected outright.

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