



Speech by

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

Hansard 7 September 2000

SOUTH SEA ISLANDER RECOGNITION STATEMENT

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.43 a.m.): Today I am pleased to join with the Premier in this significant bipartisan event. In doing so, I also acknowledge the representatives of the South Sea Islander community who are present in the public gallery for this very important and very historic event. It is significant in many ways. I thank the Premier for his courtesy in offering the Opposition this opportunity to contribute to the Hansard record of the occasion. I support the Premier's statement and simply say that the Opposition joins fully with the Government on this issue. I endorse the remarks that have been made by the Premier and I agree with them.

Later today, as the Premier has said, there will be a ceremony and gathering within these precincts at which we shall enjoy the formal part of the recognition proceedings proposed by the Government and heartily endorsed by the Opposition. I will not unduly take the time of the House at this point. I will simply say, using the words of the recognition statement itself, that—

"The Australian South Sea Islander community has played a major role in the economic, cultural and regional development of Queensland. Individual Australian South Sea Islanders have excelled in politics, government, religion, sports, art, business, health and education ... and that their unique spirituality, identity and cultural heritage enrich Queensland's culturally diverse society."

There will be a time later outside the Chamber to say a few more words and to celebrate the unique event of this recognition statement. I will be pleased, and indeed privileged, to join with the Premier on that occasion. Again, I acknowledge and indicate to the representatives of the South Sea Islander community in the public gallery today our recognition, our respect and indeed, together with the Premier, a mutual embrace of the tremendous contribution that they have made to this State and nation with considerable pain over the years. I am confident that this recognition statement is a positive initiative and a way forward for us all to work together in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in this great State and this great nation.
