



Speech by

JULIE ATTWOOD

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

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ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (5 p.m.): The Mount Ommaney electorate has a broad cross-section of ethnic communities and cultures. An ever-increasing number of Chinese and Vietnamese immigrants are settling into the western suburbs, but these are only two of the ethnic groups within the electorate. There are quite a number of Indian, German, Taiwanese, Spanish, Israeli, Sri Lankan, Dutch, Malaysian, South African, Bangladeshi, Scandinavian, Egyptian, New Zealander and British immigrants living in the area.

These people have intermingled with indigenous and Australian-born residents to make our suburbs rich in diversity and character. These immigrants have brought with them cultures that are family oriented. They are caring, loyal, courteous and hard working. Most took out Australian citizenship after they had lived here for a while. They regard themselves as Australian and do not like to be singled out and made a fuss of. They do not consider themselves to be superior to Queensland-born Australians and neither should we think ourselves superior to them.

However, as in any society, there are a few who do believe they are superior human beings. Racial and religious vilification and hatred are their stock in trade. It need not be demonstrated by killings, extreme violence or destroying someone's property; vilification and hatred can be shown through racist remarks, intolerance of another religion and culture, or through publicly defacing property with racially prejudiced graffiti.

The bill before the House amends the current act to include civil and wider criminal sanctions against denigration of those who are racially different from persons of Anglo-Saxon heritage. My friends in the various ethnic communities have been looking forward to these amendments, and some would say that the amendments do not go far enough. However, at the moment I believe that the balance between free speech and acceptable behaviour is about right.

This bill will send a clear and unambiguous message to those uncivilised thugs. The message is that they are not welcome in our suburbs. Persisting with this type of unacceptable behaviour may well cost them their freedom. I commend the bill to the House.
