



Speech by

**Mr D. BRISKEY**

**MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND**

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Hansard 19 February 2002

**TET FESTIVAL; MULTICULTURALISM**

**Mr BRISKEY** (Cleveland—ALP) (12.04 p.m.): Chuc Mung Nam Moi! Happy New Year! On 8 February I had the great honour and pleasure of joining the Vietnamese community and my parliamentary colleagues the Hon. Henry Palaszczuk, Julie Attwood and John Mickel to open the Tet Festival and celebrate the Year of the Horse. For many Vietnamese, Tet evokes a magical time of the year when people cast aside their misfortune during the previous year and embrace the New Year with hope.

**Ms Stone:** Hear, hear!

**Mr BRISKEY:** I thank the honourable member.

**An honourable member:** Why didn't you send us a horse as well?

**Mr BRISKEY:** I received a horse from the member for Capalaba and I thank him for that. In fact, it hangs proudly in my kitchen.

**Ms Liddy Clark:** The snake is a good year with the horse.

**Mr BRISKEY:** Is that right? I was actually born in the Year of the Goat. I do not know what that suggests.

The Tet Festival is a time of festivity, traditional rituals rich in symbolism, legends and superstitions. It is a time for family reunion, exchanging of gifts and best wishes, correcting faults, forgiving others, paying debts and starting the New Year on a good note. It is all about a fresh start and kicking off the New Year in a positive way.

This year, as we celebrate the Year of the Horse, we also recognise the horse's qualities of courage and strength. Many of our community have left family, friends and loved ones in their country of origin and it takes these qualities of courage and strength to come to a new country. It is hoped that these qualities will carry us through the coming year.

In the wake of recent world events, we need to embrace multiculturalism more than ever because it has the capacity to turn aside racial and religious tension and build more harmonious communities. True multiculturalism is something we have to work for, and that is what the Beattie Labor government is doing. Last year, the Beattie Labor government introduced amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act which make any public statement inciting contempt or hatred of people based on race or religion unlawful.

In November last year, the Beattie Labor government recognised 10 special Queenslanders for their contributions to promoting multiculturalism at the 2001 Multicultural Queensland Service Awards. I am pleased to say that a Vietnamese recipient, Mrs Tran Le Trinh, President of the Vietnamese Women's Association of Queensland, was one person recognised for her years of service to the Vietnamese community.

In the last financial year, the Beattie Labor government provided a number of grants to assist the Vietnamese community, including \$93,082 through Education Queensland to the three Vietnamese language schools in Darra, South Brisbane and Goodna; \$210,000 to engage Vietnamese speaking interpreters under the Queensland Government's Language Services Policy; and \$486,000 to the Australian Red Cross to develop a Training and Employment

Strategy for Clients From Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds to assist Vietnamese and other ethnic community group members to access training and employment.

I was particularly pleased to note that the Beattie Labor government provided a grant of \$7,500 towards the running of this year's Tet Festival. In the last financial year, the government through its agencies—including the Queensland Police Service, Legal Aid Queensland and the Department of Primary Industries—employed bilingual Vietnamese speaking officers to better service the Vietnamese community.

These are just some of the ways in which the government recognises the Vietnamese community and multiculturalism in this state. After all, our society has benefited for generations, and continues to benefit, from migrants from all around the world. Today, Queensland is made up of people from more than 150 countries. People born overseas and living in Queensland represent approximately 17 per cent of the state's population. In fact, the number of Vietnamese in Queensland is now estimated at around 12,000, with most living in the state's south-east corner, particularly in Brisbane.

All communities are important to our multicultural society, and at the beginning of each year Queenslanders join in to celebrate the contribution that all ethnic communities bring to our state to make it an even better place in which to live.

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