



Speech by

**Mr D. BRISKEY**

**MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND**

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### **RIVERFESTIVAL; RIVERFIESTA**

**Mr BRISKEY** (Cleveland—ALP) (11.45 a.m.): As members on both sides of the House would be aware, the Riverfestival held in Brisbane each year has grown from strength to strength since its inception in 1998. It is no secret that since that time the Riverfestival has captured the hearts and imaginations of the Brisbane community.

The river is becoming increasingly important to us. In fact, it is a major concern for many Queenslanders. To our great shame, this has not always been the case. Rivers all over the world have suffered degradation at our hands and we have been slow to recognise their importance to our way of life and to other larger bodies of water into which they flow, such as Moreton Bay, adjacent to my electorate of Cleveland. That is especially true in cities such as Brisbane, which are built around a river system and which can determine the quality of our environment.

Over the past 40 years or so, communities around the world have begun to realise the pleasure the river brings and how reliant on it we are—for example, for transport. In fact, a Queensland government-Brisbane City Council partnership has seen a lot of very hard work and planning go into bringing the Brisbane River back to its former life and beauty—back to a waterway of which we can all be proud and which we can all enjoy. That is why events such as the Riverfestival are so important not only in celebrating our river but also in educating future generations about this important resource and how we can best protect it. Riverfestival captures that beauty and plays a pivotal role in raising awareness of the plight of the Brisbane River and associated waterways.

As Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier with a special responsibility for multicultural affairs, I am pleased to inform the House that this year the Riverfestival will expand to incorporate a very important cultural event—the Riverfiesta, a one-day event showcasing the best of our rich cultural diversity. I am delighted that the Riverfestival committee has taken on board the suggestions of Multicultural Affairs Queensland in choosing to incorporate what will include many firsts in multiculturalism in Queensland and perhaps the world.

To be held on Sunday, 8 September the Riverfiesta will showcase our cultural diversity in three distinct locations along the Brisbane River—at New Farm, South Bank and St Lucia. In addition to a number of live cultural performances and foodstalls, the Riverfiesta will incorporate some exciting concepts. These will be announced at the official launch of Riverfiesta on 14 July.

The staging of Riverfiesta will be a landmark in itself. Queensland is leading the way in promoting cultural harmony within our community and is committed to building on our strengths as a multicultural society. Queenslanders are proud of our cultural diversity. The staging of more than 30 multicultural festivals throughout Queensland each year attracts many local, state and international visitors. These grassroots activities, including the Riverfestival, play a vital role in ensuring that all Australians have the chance to enjoy cultures other than their own by trying their food, music and dance.

Queensland is part of one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world and Queenslanders are as diverse as our great landscape. In Queensland we have one of the best models of best practice multiculturalism. Our population is comprised of people from more than

150 different countries, speaking over 70 languages and representing over 40 religious beliefs, and yet we live together in harmony. The sharing of traditional cultures with the broader community in such accessible and enjoyable ways enriches society in general, building a more cohesive, unified and genuinely multicultural nation. Our future depends on maintaining and strengthening our capacity to bring together people with many differences and building a strong, cohesive society.

I know that many of the ethnic communities in Brisbane and south-east Queensland are excited by the prospect of Riverfiesta and are now in the full swing of planning and implementation alongside local committees and the Riverfestival organisation. It is hoped that the event will be something the community can take ownership of and eventually develop into the state's key multicultural celebration. I have little doubt that this will be achieved. I take this opportunity to thank the chairman of Riverfestival, Trevor Reddacliff AM and his committee for their continued work in the organisation and promotion of the Riverfestival.

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