



Speech by

**Mr D. BRISKEY**

**MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND**

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Hansard 30 October 2002

#### **MIGRANT WOMEN**

**Mr BRISKEY** (Cleveland—ALP) (11.25 p.m.): I wish to draw members' attention to a new publication which tells the remarkable and courageous life journeys of volunteer migrant women and their contributions to the community. Researched and written by Jeannie Mok, a tremendous contributor to Brisbane's multicultural community, the book, *The New Wave*, looks at the lives of 16 women who have made a difference to the lives of many migrants in Queensland. The publication will be officially launched by the Premier, the Hon. Peter Beattie, during the Multicultural Service Awards to be held here at Parliament House on 7 November. For many decades now these women have been part of a silent wave of heroism which until now has been largely unrecognised by the community. *The New Wave*, funded by Multicultural Affairs Queensland, seeks to change this by providing a comprehensive, historical record of their challenges, triumphs and achievements. The title *The New Wave* has special significance to Australia's past.

The 1947 Australian census reported that 90.2 per cent of the national population declared that they were born in Australia and that 95.5 per cent considered themselves as British. By the end of World War II and the relaxation of the Immigration Restriction Act 1901, a piece of legislation which was at the cornerstone of the White Australia policy and which guided the country's immigration policies for more than 50 years, a new wave of immigrants emerged. When the White Australia policy was finally dismantled, there was another new wave of migrants from Asia. This was the start of Australia's future as a more cohesive, unified and genuinely multicultural nation.

Despite the adversity they each faced as a result of their own settlement challenges, these women, whose lives are detailed in the pages of this book, have become pioneers of migrant voluntarism. Their achievements serve as a constant source of inspiration to the new wave of migrants. Each has devoted many years of dedication and thankless service to assist those who face the very same challenges they themselves faced when first arriving in Australia. As this publication correctly points out, these women are in many ways the unsung heroines of our community, providing a valuable service without ever seeking a reward. While the individual stories in this book are unique, a common element in every story is an underlying compassion and an overwhelming commitment to cultural diversity. Without their contributions, Queensland would not enjoy the rich, cultural diversity and harmony that exists today.

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