



Speech by

**Mr D. BRISKEY**

**MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND**

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Hansard 20 August 2003

**APPROPRIATION BILLS—ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A**

**Mr BRISKEY** (Cleveland—ALP) (2.35 p.m.): Promoting harmony within our culturally diverse community has been a strong focus of the Beattie government through Multicultural Affairs Queensland in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Firstly, I want to make mention of an important election commitment delivered in this current term of the government, the introduction of amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 which makes unlawful any public statement that incites hatred towards, serious contempt for or severe ridicule of a person or group on the basis of race or religion. In the first term of the Beattie government a total of \$1,000,662 was provided for 110 projects aimed to promote positive community relations and eliminate racism. In the government's second term, 171 projects have been funded for a total of \$1,353,844. Since 1998 a total of \$2,354,508 has been allocated to support community activities countering racism, prejudice and intolerance and promoting positive acceptance of diversity in our community.

In 2002 Multicultural Affairs Queensland funded the Anti-Discrimination Commission of Queensland to jointly undertake a project to disseminate antivilification information to key ethnic communities in Queensland. The result of this is a rights card on racial and religious vilification which is available in five languages and which has been distributed to ethnic communities. During this year MAQ has also established the Multicultural Antiracism Community Reference Group to provide a mechanism for monitoring community relations and developing strategies to respond to racial and religious vilification. The protocol ensures that the Queensland government is at the forefront in countering acts of racism, developing appropriate community relations interventions and maintaining harmonious relations during times of crisis.

On the community front, the Local Area Multicultural Partnership program, or LAMP as it is otherwise known, is a great strategy between the state government, local governments and the LGAQ to support and engage with communities to be actively involved in multicultural Queensland. Under the strategy, councils are funded to employ a full-time multicultural community relations officer. LAMP funding has been provided to 14 participating local governments and the LGAQ over the past five years. Following the successful evaluation of the program, I am pleased to report that LAMP has been extended for a further four years.

The Beattie government continues to strongly promote multiculturalism and community engagement by providing grants to foster participation in multicultural Queensland. One component of the cultural diversity support strategy is the Multicultural Assistance Program community worker funding, which aims to assist six key community organisations to engage with governments on multicultural issues. This program has been extended for a second round.

Other funding includes that available under the Multicultural Assistance Program, which provides submission based funding for festivals, community relations and development projects, including special projects to support Australian South Sea Islander initiatives and special projects for refugees and targeted community development projects addressing participation and engagement. Other significant initiatives include the creation of the skilled migration unit, which is being led by the Department of State Development to assist businesspeople to migrate to Queensland and to act as a conduit for the provision of services to other skilled migrants and their families. In 2001-02 the skilled stream program attracted some 53,520 migrants—58 per cent of

the total migration program—and in 2003-04 there will be 63,300 places available in this category. Skilled migration brings new investment, job creation and economic activity to Queensland, which this government is keen to capitalise on.

During this year MAQ also launched its productive diversity kits. The kits provide case studies encouraging maximising our multicultural advantage and using language skills, know-how, networks, experience and cultural knowledge for business advantage. Multiculturalism involves concepts of a fair go, equity and social cohesion. It also includes production diversity, which is about the economic benefits of diversity—the business dividends. Queensland's first productive diversity kits provide practical case studies on how multiculturalism can assist business with improving customer service, export development and sales knowledge and international expertise.