



Speech by

Michael Choi

MEMBER FOR CAPALABA

Hansard Wednesday, 12 May 2004

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (5.07 p.m.), continuing: I have pleasure in continuing my address-in-reply which I had left off before lunchtime today. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the member for Algeester on her role as parliamentary secretary to the Premier with responsibility for multicultural affairs. I know that the member will do a wonderful job. I would also like to congratulate the previous parliamentary secretary to the Premier, Mr Darryl Briskey, for doing a wonderful job as well.

There is one particular area of multiculturalism that is my pet subject; it is the word 'tolerance'. It is well known that Australia is a very tolerant society. We tolerate people's differences, differences of opinion, culture and a whole host of other issues. It is this word 'tolerance' that I have a real problem with. I would like to ask my colleagues in the House here how many of us like to be tolerated? How many of us like to be tolerated by our peers? How many of us like to be tolerated by our workmates? I think the answer would probably be we do not want to be tolerated. The word 'tolerance' has a negative connotation to it. It gives the impression that there is something fundamentally wrong with you that other people have to tolerate.

I think our nation has to move away from being a tolerant society to an accepting society. We need to learn how to accept people's differences. We may not agree with them. We may not agree with their cultural backgrounds, their creed, the way they do things or, may I say, their sexual preference. We should live not only in a tolerant society but also an accepting society. We have to move from tolerance to acceptance. In future we may become a society where we cherish people's differences.

I take this opportunity to thank my wife for being there for me all the time. I would not put up with myself, so I do not know how she does it.

Government members interjected.

Mr CHOI: I take those interjections. I have no idea how to tell her that I love her and to thank her for her support. She did suggest that a diamond ring would do. Being an engineer, I think overglorified carbon is a waste of money. I thank my children, Priscilla, Rachel and Claudia, for understanding that dad is not always home at night for them. They are very good children for our family and everybody who visits our house. I look forward to the next three years of serving the Beattie Labor government and fulfilling all the promises we made at the election and continuing to deliver better government and better outcomes for all Queenslanders.