



Speech by

Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard Wednesday, 10 February 2010

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Indian Students

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (10.03 am): Queensland is home to more than 20,000 Indian students and the Bligh government values their contribution to the state. They make a tremendous contribution to Queensland's cultural, social and economic life. In November 2009, there were 20,700 international students from India enrolled in Queensland. We want to ensure that the state retains its reputation as a desirable destination for international students. While there have been some recent incidents in Queensland involving Indian students, they have not been on the same scale as those that have occurred in other states, especially Victoria.

Queensland has been on the front foot when it comes to supporting its Indian community. Last month I attended a meeting called by Indian community leaders, which was also attended by the Indian high commissioner, Sujatha Singh, and Police Commissioner Bob Atkinson. At this meeting I was pleased to announce the appointment of Umesh Chandra as liaison officer between the Queensland government and Queensland's Indian community. Mr Chandra is a well-respected figure in the local Indian community. He is president of the Global Organisation of People of Indian Origin, publisher of the *Brisbane Indian Times* and vice-president of the Federation of Indian Communities in Queensland. Mr Chandra will play a key role in our engagement strategy with Indian students. The government accepted the recommendation of the Indian Honorary Consul of Queensland, Professor Sarva-Daman Singh, about Mr Chandra's appointment. His appointment forms part of a whole-of-government effort to support local Indian students and to ensure that they feel safe and welcome in Queensland.

We will be holding a third Indian community round table next month here at Parliament House, following the two round tables that we held last year. I will also be visiting university campuses during upcoming O Week, where Multicultural Affairs Queensland staff will be on hand to provide information and support to Indian students. The education minister will continue in his efforts to support local Indian students while the Queensland Police Service will be giving international students important personal safety messages. The Bligh government is getting right behind the state's Indian community. Queensland is a safe and welcoming place for students from all backgrounds and we want to keep it that way.