



Speech by

Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard Wednesday, 15 September 2010

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Multicultural Assistance Program

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (10.08 am): This government is committed to building a strong and fair community. Our state is one rich in diversity and culture. Almost 18 per cent of Queenslanders were born outside of Australia. We are a state of more than 200 cultures speaking over 220 languages. The benefits of cultural diversity, promoting economic development and community vibrancy, are truly vital to our thriving state. Since becoming minister I have travelled around the state and seen firsthand the importance of multicultural festivals and events in our cities and our towns. Therefore, today I am pleased to announce an extra \$100,000 in the 2010-11 round of the state government's Multicultural Assistance Program. This will bring the total budget for this highly successful and important program to \$800,000.

The grants round will open today and close on 15 November. I encourage all members to get behind this program and to let their local organisations know to apply. This funding is building stronger communities. It has gone to Central Queensland for the Taste of the World Festival, the south-west for the Languages and Cultural Festival in Toowoomba and to Townsville's iconic cultural festival, while in the Far North the Australian-Italian Festival in Ingham is always a hit, as is the Paniyiri Greek Festival here in South Brisbane. But this funding also builds community relations with other projects. Last year, it went to the African Seniors Club's Peace and Harmony Project, the Mackay Regional Council for multicultural swimming lessons and the PCYC in Brisbane to develop an African basketball village.

Last month I attended the Mareeba Multicultural Festival, as did the member for Cook, Jason O'Brien, who I know is passionately committed to the issue of multiculturalism. More than 60 cultures were represented at the festival. Local residents in the region have migrated from as far afield as Italy, England, New Zealand, Germany and Papua New Guinea. Earlier this month I joined our Mount Isa MP, Betty Kiernan, for that city's multicultural festival—a major event on Mount Isa's social calendar. This year, the focus was on India and residents put on an amazing night of colour, music, food and a bit of Bollywood dancing as well.

The Bligh government continues to do more to promote multiculturalism in Queensland. Later this month we will be announcing the winners of the Queensland Multicultural Awards. The awards have received 141 nominations across six categories in recognition of people who have helped strengthen multiculturalism in Queensland. The Bligh government is delivering for Queensland's multicultural communities and we will continue to do so.