




Speech by

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MEMBER FOR INALA

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MULTICULTURAL RECOGNITION BILL

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.35 pm): I present a bill for an act to provide for a Multicultural Queensland Charter, a Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council and a multicultural action plan and for related purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Health and Community Services Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Multicultural Recognition Bill 2012 [\[845\]](#).

Tabled paper: Multicultural Recognition Bill 2012, explanatory notes [\[846\]](#).

As the former minister for transport and multicultural affairs, I was appalled to learn from the assistant minister and member for Brisbane Central, Mr Robert Cavallucci, that the LNP government has not taken up the cause of Queensland's multicultural community by re-introducing this important piece of legislation, which lapsed at the end of the last parliamentary term. The philosophy behind this bill is fundamental: Queensland's multicultural community is vibrant and important and valuable. It is a community that deserves the recognition of us all. The Labor Party reflects that and recognises it with the reintroduction of this bill.

This bill builds on our strong multicultural policy of 'a multicultural future for all of us'. The policy was formulated after extensive consultations with more than 1,300 participants from Cairns to the Gold Coast, from Mount Isa to Gladstone, who attended 31 community forums held right across the state. By refusing to take up the cause, this LNP government has in turn refused to recognise our multicultural community. That is not only disturbing; it is discourteous and offensive.

We already know that the LNP does not care about Queensland's multicultural community with the recent service cuts experienced by organisations such as the Multicultural Community Centre Ltd, Access Community Services, the Multicultural Development Association, the Migrant Centre Organisation and others. Those organisations provide critical services to refugees and newly arrived migrants to help them with improved language and employment skills. The cold-hearted members opposite choose to repay those services by slashing them.

These cuts, along with the contempt with which the LNP has approached the implementation of Queensland's multicultural policy, is a worrying step backwards for this great state and the diverse communities that make up our society. Labor will always stand up for equality, Labor will always stand up for opportunity and Labor will always stand up for fairness, including supporting our multicultural communities.

Government members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order!

Ms PALASZCZUK: One of my proudest moments in the House was when I introduced the Multicultural Recognition Bill. Why did we do it? Because people have come from all parts of the world and have contributed to building our great state of Queensland. They have contributed from all different walks of life. There was extensive consultation on the bill. The ability to consult with people is something that this government fundamentally lacks. We have seen that with the job slashing that is happening under this government.

The Multicultural Recognition Bill act was consulted on at length. Community consultations were held right across the state which I attended. It was one of the proudest moments of my life when I stood in this chamber and I stood up for multiculturalism. What have we heard from those opposite? At the India Day Fair held recently recognising Indian independence I heard the assistant minister very clearly say that this government had absolutely no intention of reintroducing this bill. That is what he told me; that the LNP government had washed its hands when it came to recognising multiculturalism in this great state.

Labor will stand up for multiculturalism. My grandparents came to this country from war-torn Germany as Polish migrants with absolutely nothing and they built a life here. I am proud of the sacrifices they have made because I would not be standing in this House without the sacrifices that they and many thousands of other migrants have made. This is a chance for all members of the House to stand up for multiculturalism; to stand up for what they believe in. This will be a fundamental test for this LNP government. Does it support multiculturalism or is it washing its hands of it? The minister is here in the chamber this afternoon. I challenge the minister: will he support this piece of legislation or not?

I am not going to rush this piece of legislation through. I am going to ask the committee for at least two months consultation. Do honourable members hear that? Not a week, not four days, not seven days, not 10 days—I am going to ask the committee to consider this over a two-month period. That is going to be a final decision for the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, but this is an important piece of work. I am going to stand up for it. The Labor Party is going to stand up for it. We will wait and see what the LNP has to say about it.