




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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ADJOURNMENT

Multiculturalism

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (1.15 am): The weekend following budget week and the end of Ramadan I was alarmed to see gatherings of people at Reclaim Australia events across our nation. Conversely, I listened to Mr Abdul Gelim, the executive director and co-founder of the Queensland Intercultural Society, at the 2015 Peace and Dialogue Iftar Dinner and award ceremony held in parliament on the Thursday of budget week. One would be forgiven for wondering how two groups of Australians hold different positions on our country.

We are an egalitarian society believing in a fair go for all. We are a country that was built on the back of migrants from all parts of the world—a country that is tolerant and accepting of one another. Yet the Reclaim Australia events left me with many questions—questions like what we have to reclaim Australia from? Surely if anyone had a right to reclaim Australia it would be our Indigenous people.

Why do politicians need to comment, let alone attend these rallies? In particular, I direct my attention to federal LNP member for Dawson, George Christensen. He says ‘our voices say we will not surrender’. Surrender to what and whom? I find his attendance at these bigoted rallies as a politician extremely alarming. Elected members of parliament are elected to represent all of their constituents, not just those who can attract the farthest right-leaning side of our communities. The Prime Minister should now stand up and show leadership and send a clear message to the members of his government that attendance at these bigoted events is not acceptable. In Mr Abdul Gelim’s words, delivered in his speech at the iftar dinner in the Premiers Hall on Thursday night—

In an era where conflict seems to dominate the news headlines, the silent majority are continually working to remove prejudice, racism and bigotry and sowing the seeds of peace, compassion and respect.

We believe the best way to respond to local and international incidents is by positive action through dialogue and respect, even if you disagree.

How true! I would hope that we, as representatives of all Queenslanders, can work together for all Queenslanders despite their race, despite their religion and despite their culture or beliefs to foster peace and respect for all.