



Speech By  
**Hon. Shannon Fentiman**


**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

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Record of Proceedings, 5 May 2015

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Multiculturalism**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (12.48 pm): Queensland is a multicultural success story, with over 220 different cultures thriving in our communities. One of the greatest strengths of my electorate of Waterford is its multiculturalism. It is a community of diverse and rich cultures. It is a place where traditional owners and Australia's most recent immigrants make their mark. It is the generous spirit of the people of Waterford and their generosity in welcoming new residents that makes it the wonderful place that it is.

Our government will ensure that it is responsive to the growing diversity of places like Waterford. We want Queensland to be a place where people can thrive and where there is a strong sense of belonging for people of all cultural backgrounds. I am pleased to advise that funding has been approved to continue and expand the very successful Community Action for a Multicultural Society program—simply known as CAMS.

My electorate and region will benefit from the on-the-ground, dedicated CAMS workers in our community to promote harmony, diversity and inclusion working with great organisations like Access Community Services Ltd based in Woodridge and MultiLink Community Services based in Logan Central. Many local Waterford residents will benefit from these organisations having additional funding and support.

I want to take this opportunity to praise the work of two hardworking local women from my electorate—Gail Kerr from Access and Helen Coyne from MultiLink—who do so much work in the Logan community to promote multiculturalism. Our government believes Queenslanders from all backgrounds should have the opportunity to participate and contribute to our economic, social and cultural life.

That is why there will also be a new statewide CAMS worker dedicated to focus on issues and the unique challenges that face Muslim women across Queensland. Recently I met with the Islamic Women's Association of Queensland which delivers an array of supports and services in the broader Logan region and across the state to their communities and the families they lead.

Muslim women front particular challenges because they are often the visible face of their faith. When I met with Muslim women in Logan they told me that they had experienced increased levels of verbal abuse and violence and have told me that many of them are living in fear—some even too scared to walk down the street.

Women in these communities are central links to their family and to other families and play a critical role in the wellbeing of families and social connections. Our new CAMS worker will clearly work closely with the Islamic Women's Association of Queensland.

The CAMS program is held in high regard by our multicultural communities. It is valued for the way in which it builds connected communities, removes barriers to participation and makes a positive difference to people's lives. After meeting with a number of individuals and organisations that service our state's culturally and linguistically diverse communities, they told me they were concerned about the Newman government's intention to discontinue the CAMS program in June this year. Our government is continuing and expanding the program. This initiative puts into practice our commitment to promoting and strengthening multiculturalism, with a total funding commitment of over \$6.3 million over three years.

I am keen to build stronger ties with Waterford's multicultural groups and adopt their ideas on how to make Queensland even more inclusive. It is an important body of work and is on top of other initiatives such as the allocation of over \$670,000 in funding for 101 diverse cultural events and multicultural festivals in 2015. Many of those are held in the Logan community. This funding helps promote the understanding of Queensland's multiculturalism and helps celebrate our diversity.

There are also nine economic participation projects across the state that have been approved to foster economic independence for migrant and refugee jobseekers. One of those projects will again benefit the Logan community and my electorate of Waterford—the Titans 4 Tomorrow Pasifika Youth Pathways project. We in the Palaszczuk government recognise the intangible worth of investing in multiculturalism. As the minister responsible for the Logan: City of Choice initiative I can say that we are focusing on multicultural cohesion as the drive for social economic development in our community.