



Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 16 February 2016

MULTICULTURAL RECOGNITION BILL

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (4.22 pm): I rise to address the Multicultural Recognition Bill 2015. I also congratulate the member for Brisbane Central on her elevation to the Palaszczuk ministry.

My fellow Queenslanders and I welcome all migrants and refugees, regardless of their religious and cultural backgrounds, who have settled here and are making their homes in Queensland. All of us should support and assist them in any reasonable way to enjoy the great opportunities and privileges that Queensland and Australia offer. As such I support the purpose of this bill, as it aims to recognise the valuable contribution of diverse groups of people to the fabric of our community in Queensland. The establishment of a multicultural Queensland charter and the formation of a multicultural Queensland advisory council are positive mechanisms to further develop policy and action plans, particularly with respect to job creation and economic growth amongst culturally and linguistically diverse populations. Given that community cohesion can potentially be adversely affected by national and international events, including overseas conflicts and heightened security protocols, the proposed objectives and intent of the bill provide for mechanisms to assist with maintaining and strengthening community cohesion.

As a graduate of Monash University with a master's degree in diplomacy and trade, I take this opportunity to make the following observations as part of the debate. Many people of different faiths and religious backgrounds are appalled by the acts of extremism and violent ideology we have all seen in recent times, but for extremism to be absolutely and utterly defeated relevant community and religious leaders must act with greater clarity of purpose in relation to repudiating extremism and the associated criminal actions of the few within our multicultural society. I, along with many Queenslanders and Australians, continue to be outraged by the cowardly murders of Katrina Dawson and Tori Johnson in the Martin Place siege of 2014. We are also angry about the murder of Curtis Cheng outside the Parramatta Police Station in October 2015. I wish to place on record my formal condolences to the families of those Australians.

We are all appalled at the attempted radicalisation of vulnerable young Australians. Whilst we cannot blame specific sections of our society for various barbaric crimes and attacks, clearly we must recognise that there are significant social, cultural, legal and security issues requiring multifaceted strategies and actions within a framework of relevant community dialogue. I would reject any notion that to articulate this is to discriminate. Janet Albrechtsen, in her article in the *Australian* of Wednesday, 25 November 2015, said—

In liberal democracies young men and women have been radicalised right under our noses. Swayed to Islamism, these men and women, boys and girls, have become easy pickings ... Radicalisation has flourished because we have failed to challenge the stifling orthodoxy where even to critique Islam is treated as divisive. If we can't have an open discussion ... we're not only failing to stand up for our freedoms, we're failing to stand up for our security.

The implicit rationalisation and endorsement of extremist ideology by the muted response of some does our state of Queensland and Australia a great disservice when it comes to protecting our

freedoms, our values and our western democratic way of life given our multicultural heritage as a state and nation. Those left wing media operatives, civil libertarians and some Labor politicians who have sought to make factually incorrect statements to criticise and denigrate federal and state members of parliament in relation to the debate on security and other law and order matters may in fact be de facto criminal sympathisers and supporters. The same could also be said of socialist apparatchiks in unions, including ASMOFQ and the Together union, who support union bullying, illegality, industrial relations warfare and vandalism. The Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption has certainly uncovered some outrageous conduct. But for those civil libertarians who are now well and truly out of touch with mainstream thinking, a new generation of conservative politicians in Queensland has not forgiven, nor forgotten, well-remembered comments, strategies and actions over the last 30 years let alone hypocritical attacks on ministers of the former LNP government.

Unfortunately, some of what has transpired with respect to public criticism can be traced to the core roots of left-wing philosophy and dogma which aspires to secular intellectual elitism and the failed misguided notion of egalitarian dialogue and outcomes for western civilisation. This is no more evident than by recent comments, strategies and actions by the Palaszczuk government. Queensland and the nation will not be silenced by those who espouse and adhere to weak, hypocritical, outdated left-wing philosophy and rhetoric. The ineffectual leadership of Queensland by this state government and its associated band of socialist sympathisers, including certain civil libertarians and unions, will ensure that those who seek to protect our social, economic and cultural future from utopian socialism will continue to grow in strength and numbers. Teachers, doctors, lawyers, electricians, builders and small business owners, to name but a few, will not be silenced by the Centre Left.

Our western values and our culture need to be cherished, respected and defended at all costs. Our democratic institutions, our rule of law, our freedoms, our flag, our state and our nation must receive the loyalty and respect of grateful Queenslanders. With individual rights also come mandatory responsibilities—in other words, mutual obligation. Unfortunately, political correctness has now gone too far and risks eroding free speech. Our resolve must never waver, and the political leadership of this state and in all democratic jurisdictions and nationally must be resolute in standing for decency and in supporting the pillars and foundations of our western values as part of a 21st century multicultural Queensland and beyond.

I support the Multicultural Recognition Bill 2015. Its strategic purpose and objectives in strengthening multicultural policy, program development and implementation across government are positive for Queensland. Many multicultural communities and their associated events and festivals contribute to the terrific fabric of our great state. Ensuring we all strengthen the diversity and cohesiveness of multiculturalism is vitally important. I support the Multicultural Recognition Bill 2015 and the benefits it will deliver for a culturally diverse Queensland. My support, however, is subject to the appropriate and transparent selection of advisory council members and the ongoing reporting on the outcomes of the intent of the act as a part of good governance. I commend the bill to the House.