




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Moorooka, Bus Incident

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (12.05 pm): We are all shocked and saddened at the attack on Brisbane bus driver Manmeet Sharma which resulted in his death last week at Moorooka. For the tragic loss of this beloved member of the community I express my sincerest condolences to the Sharma family, his fiancée and friends. Grief at unexpected loss is always a weighty burden. I cannot even start to imagine how this burden is so much heavier when it comes from such an act of evil. This evil shocks us all, as all lives are precious and no-one deserves to die or be injured in such circumstances. Violence is never acceptable. Police have laid charges against the alleged offender. This constrains our comments for legal reasons, but I note the health minister's comments that the alleged killer had previously been known to Queensland Health as a mental health patient.

There seems to be no rhyme or reason behind the senseless act of violence which led to Mr Sharma's death. My thoughts and prayers are with all in the community whose lives have been touched by Manmeet Sharma, an extremely talented man. Manmeet Sharma was known locally as Manmeet Alisher in reference, I understand, to his beloved home town of Alisher in the Sangrur district of Punjab. He had quickly put down rich and vibrant roots into the soil of his new homeland of Australia. The outpouring of grief by our Punjab community and the broader Indian community is echoed by all of us here today.

We have heard in recent days about Manmeet's talents as a singer, poet and actor—a very talented man with a bright future. This tragic news comes as Brisbane's Indian community was celebrating Diwali, a festival honouring the victory of light over darkness, good over evil, knowledge over ignorance and hope over despair. We stand together with the Indian community knowing that hope and light will ultimately triumph and we will get through this dark time. I think we saw that with the act of bravery and courage from bystanders to this horrific attack, particularly taxidriver Aguek Nyok. As one of the first on the scene of the smoking bus, Mr Nyok kicked in the back door so that passengers could escape. I echo the comments of police superintendent Jim Keogh, who remarked—

As terrible and as tragic as this matter has been, it's evidence that community spirit is still strong ...

Our Indian community here in Queensland is known for its diversity. It is known for how it enriches our lives. They are good citizens, good community members and hard workers who give back so much. To the Sharma family I express our condolences. To the broader Punjab community, the Indian community, all who knew this fine young man and his fiancée: we will not forget. We do stand against such acts of evil, such acts of violence. We also know that it is quite a pathway from here, for the family in particular, and that there will need to be ongoing support. We need to know how we as a community and how we as members of parliament can better support this family on this journey ahead. Our condolences, our thoughts and our prayers go out to the family and to the community.