




Speech By  
**Hon. Leeanne Enoch**

**MEMBER FOR ALGESTER**

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**MULTICULTURAL RECOGNITION BILL**

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (4.18 pm): I rise to support the Multicultural Recognition Bill this afternoon. I start with the fact that all in this House know I am a first nation woman, a Quandamooka woman, someone originally from North Stradbroke Island who had the opportunity to move to Logan where there are many different cultures. Recently, like many people, we had a chance to have a bit of a break over Christmas. I had a chance to go home to my own country, North Stradbroke Island. There is a place there that reminded me of the reason this particular bill is so important. It is a place called Myora Springs. It is a freshwater spring and it meets the ocean. It is a tidal spring. What you see is fresh water meeting the salt water and moving and working together.

It is a strange thing if you have never seen it before, but it reminds you of how two very different and distinct bodies of water can survive, interact and work together in a way that complements the whole ecosystem of that location. Multiculturalism is all about being able to be distinct in your own way, to still be freshwater or salt water, but somehow moving together and working together to create a new environment where you both survive and you both thrive in a positive way. For me, that is what this Multicultural Recognition Bill is all about. As everyone has said, Queensland has a long and rich history of diversity. Establishing a multicultural Queensland charter as set out in this bill will ensure that we continue to recognise and respond to our culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

I am pleased to see the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the preamble to this bill. This acknowledgment is consistent with the preamble to the Constitution of Queensland 2001 and further entrenches the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first peoples of this state. As I said, as a Quandamooka woman originally from North Stradbroke Island I am proud to be from a people who have called Queensland home for more than 3,000 generations. Queensland has long been a popular destination for those looking to make a new life in a new country—from the first British settlers who came and cohabited with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the 1800s, to the wave of Europeans who reached our shores in the aftermath of the Second World War and the migrants of the 21st century. And who can blame them for wanting to come here, where salt water and freshwater meet. Those of us who are fortunate enough to call Queensland home know that this is the best place on earth to live. From the beaches of Coolangatta and North Stradbroke Island, to Thursday Island in Far North Queensland and all points in between, our state has everything that you could ever want.

But what makes Queensland even more special is our willingness to welcome newcomers into our community with open arms. I have spent most of my life living and working in the city of Logan, which is represented by over 200 cultures and nationalities. I am proud of our ability to embrace our differences and forget about them so that we can work together for the betterment of our community. Just like Myora Springs on North Stradbroke Island, Logan is a place where very different distinct groups of people somehow find a way to create an environment where everybody thrives and survives. That is

a very special environment, and when I look at my own electorate of Algester it is a wonderful example of people from a wide range of backgrounds coming together to build a vibrant, close-knit community. Nearly 30 per cent of the residents in my electorate were born in a country other than Australia and they come from more than 30 countries around the world.

But while many migrants find the transition into the Queensland community an easy one, there are others who find the cultural and language divides much more difficult to overcome. As such, it is important that we have in place a framework to help with integration and acceptance of identity whilst valuing the skills and culture of others so that we can weave them into our state's rich tapestry. This bill is about providing equitable access to support and services, opening access to participate in Queensland's economy and ensuring there are policies in place to help new migrants succeed. The next great Queensland entrepreneur, scientist or innovator could be among our migrant community, and we need to ensure that they have the opportunity to make the most of their talents. This bill is not about maintaining differences and non-assimilation; this is about ensuring that the freshwater and the salt water can live together in harmony. I commend the bill to the House.