



Speech By  
**Hon. Cameron Dick**


**MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE**

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**ADJOURNMENT**

**Woodridge Electorate**

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.42 pm): It is a very great honour and one of the privileges of my life to represent the people of Woodridge in this House. The Woodridge electorate is a rich and culturally diverse community, a place which celebrates difference and faces up to its challenges with an open hand, an open heart and a welcoming spirit of acceptance.

The broader Logan area is not so much a disadvantaged area as an area with disadvantage in it, hardly surprising given that it is home to 68 per cent of the refugees who settle in Queensland and is a community that possesses one of the highest rates of new residents from non-English speaking backgrounds in the country. Many of my friends and neighbours in the Woodridge electorate came to Australia from traumatic and desperate circumstances, but they have arrived in our country with a steely determination to make a better life for themselves and their families and are committed to making a positive contribution to their new home. How dispiriting it is then for the people of Logan to be singled out by the morally bankrupt Turnbull government to be drug tested before receiving income support, to have the indignity of unemployment compounded by the presumption of criminality. There is no greater distinction between the Labor Party and the LNP than this. When we declare war on poverty, they declare war on the poor.

Successive federal coalition governments have a long history of cutting the services that battlers rely on, particularly in areas such as health and education. The only cut the LNP has proposed to the big end of town, however, is a cut to the corporate tax rate. Mandatory drug testing has failed in the past to cure the problem that it seeks to address. The Turnbull government's proposal has been rightly condemned by leaders and commentators as disparate as the President of the Australian Medical Association, the President of the Law Council of Australia, leaders of drug and alcohol treatment and rehabilitation services and economists such as Ross Gittins and Peter Martin.

Labor rejects the LNP's wagging finger of admonition in favour of the open hand of assistance and a policy agenda to help all Australians wherever they live and regardless of their circumstances. Australia has a social safety net of which it can be justifiably proud, and there are citizens in every suburb in the country in receipt of a government benefit. Where is the drug testing proposed for Toorak, Point Piper, Clayfield or Canberra? Indeed the Commonwealth may find it more productive if they more regularly breath-tested the former prime minister and federal Liberal member for Warringah, Tony Abbott. Members of this House will recall, some with disgust, that when Australia faced its greatest economic crisis since the great depression, Tony Abbott was so drunk that he had passed out in his parliament office in the parliament of Australia and was unable to vote on, let alone debate, legislative measures of the Rudd Labor government that strengthened and saved the Australian economy.

On this side of the House we believe in an Australia for all Australians, a Queensland for all Queenslanders and in a society where our youth can look confidently to their government to offer support rather than punishment and sanction. To selectively target and stigmatise entire communities, as the Turnbull government seeks to do, is public policy at its worst. At a time when the nation is craving genuine leadership, once again Malcolm Turnbull has demonstrated he simply is not up to the job.