



Speech By  
**Andrew Powell**


**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

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Record of Proceedings, 23 August 2018

**MOTION**

**Immigration**

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (3.07 pm): I rise to address the motion moved by the member for Sandgate. At the outset, I too repudiate the comments made by Queensland Senator Fraser Anning representing Katter's Australian Party. It might surprise many in this chamber that I have had a very intimate personal interaction with immigration and multiculturalism throughout my life. I have celebrated the richness and the benefits that come from a culturally diverse community, but I have also witnessed the outcomes of nations struggling with multiculturalism and trying to achieve the same successes that we have here in Australia.

Some of my first memories of my father's working life were when he worked for World Vision in Melbourne resettling those Vietnamese boat people that the member for Sandgate spoke of. The fact that my memories are of me and my brother standing next to a pyramid of spring rolls at a Vietnamese wedding probably gives members an indication of my love of multicultural food ever since. That approach that my father took in that work, the beliefs and the ethics that he has instilled in me as a result, have lived with me from that time. Growing up in Melbourne, it is not surprising that my best mate at school was a kid by the name of Tom Kalogerakos. We had a very multicultural community at the school I went to with some of our earlier immigrants to Australia.

My family moved to Sydney where Dad continued his work with World Vision as the then regional manager for the South Pacific. This saw him go into all of the Pacific island nations that we here in Australia have a close affinity with and a longstanding history with. It was not uncommon for me to go to sleep at night to the sounds of a kava party happening down in our family's living room, with representatives from all of the South Pacific nations joined in voice with a guitar and a kava bowl. Again, this was a wonderful experience which then reflected in some of my own experiences. Nearly all of my own travel has been in the South Pacific to nations like Tonga, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and Fiji.

It was my time in Fiji—four months of what was meant to be a 12-month experience—that showed me that when multiculturalism is not adopted or is not done successfully it often leads to dysfunction within a nation and within a community. The reason our term in Fiji was cut short was the then 2000 coup when, because of the rise of Indian representation in the Fijian parliament, George Speight took matters into his own hands and overthrew the popularly elected government of the day.

We are very blessed in this nation to be able to welcome people from other countries as indeed many of us standing here have come from another country sometime in the distant past. We need to take that on board and continue to present that to the broader community. We have a responsibility as community leaders to do that.

I do caution the minister to be very careful about trying to politicise this motion this afternoon and the activities. It is fair to say that both major parties have some darker moments when it comes to multiculturalism and immigration. Even currently, as was raised through a number of questions put

during question time yesterday, the Labor government sitting opposite have some questions to answer around their association with Katter's Australian Party. Firstly, they continue to support an agreement with the Katter's Australian Party that sees them receive, out of the Premier's discretionary budget, five additional staff. If they are serious about standing up to the comments made by Katter's Australian Party they can tear up that agreement right now.

**Mr Dametto** interjected.

**Mr POWELL:** Secondly—and I am glad the member for Hinchinbrook has raised that—the reason the member for Hinchinbrook is sitting in this chamber is that the Labor Party preferenced him. The minister should be very careful about throwing stones around multiculturalism and immigration in this state and this nation because there are very serious instances on all sides of politics about which we can hang our heads in shame and we should have known better, and we can learn from them. I hope the minister and the Labor Party are seriously looking at those two matters right now.