




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Record of Proceedings, 23 August 2018

MOTION

Immigration

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (3.57 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the motion. It was the forebears of the LNP who reversed Labor's White Australia policy. It was Sir Robert Menzies who relinquished Australia from the grip of the White Australia policy and it was finally delivered under the Prime Ministership of Harold Holt. It was a conservative government that believed in the right of the individual and implemented the immigration policies that built our great state.

It should be remembered that the Snowy Mountains scheme would not have been built without immigration. Around two-thirds of the workforce employed in the construction of the scheme were immigrant workers from over 30 countries. The Snowy Mountains scheme was a critical water development that provided a critical electricity supply all the way to states such as Queensland.

Businesses in my electorate depend on 457 visa holders to exist. In fact, at the height of the mining boom people could not get a cup of coffee at McDonald's unless that cup of coffee was served by somebody who held a 457 visa. The abattoirs rely on Vietnamese people. The sawmills rely on Chinese people. Cleaners rely on Chinese people. Aged care homes rely on people from the Philippines who hold 457 visas. There is a medical practice in my electorate that has doctors who come from Iran. I have met a number of those doctors and, in fact, some of them are my doctors and they are very good doctors. There are Africans who work as welders on 457 visas. They are paid above award wages. In fact, we have a shortage of those welders and we would love to have some more of those 457 visa holders. That is what businesses in my electorate say to me.

I also want to acknowledge the 77 local governments—sorry, the 76 local governments—in Queensland that conduct citizenship ceremonies across Queensland for those people from other countries who have chosen to make Australia their new home.

It brings me to the question, perhaps for the minister, of whether the administrator at the Ipswich City Council is able to conduct those citizenship and affirmation ceremonies following his appointment at Ipswich.

Mr Hinchliffe: All the laws are the same.

Ms LEAHY: As the minister is both minister for local government and multicultural affairs, I encourage the government to make sure that the people of Ipswich who are currently in the process of progressing their citizenship and those who are yet to apply are able to continue to do that. It would be good if they can continue to have their citizenship and their affirmation ceremony in their own community of Ipswich. I take the interjection of the minister.

The vast majority of citizenship ceremonies are organised and hosted by local councils in Queensland. Regardless of the new citizen's location, be it in Burke or Brisbane, local governments play a very important role in ensuring that citizenship ceremonies are meaningful and a good experience

for those people who have chosen to make Australia their home. I thank local governments across Queensland for the responsibility that they undertake for those ceremonies and making people from different nationalities feel welcome.

Brisbane City Council goes a step further with its commitment to multicultural Brisbane through services and initiatives for people from culturally linguistic diverse backgrounds. Council provides linkages and information for people from these backgrounds who are starting a new life in Brisbane. Lord Mayor Graham Quirk hosts a multicultural roundtable that identifies and facilitates opportunities for businesses and economic development in Brisbane's multicultural community.

Last weekend I was lucky to visit the Western Downs Regional Council which conducted its citizenship ceremony at the Dalby Delicious and Delightful Festival which is a festival hosted by a number of food vendors who come from different nationalities. There was a wide array of vendors from Afghanis to Italians and Filipinos. The festival was a great display of multicultural traditional dances, fashion and food. The newest Australians at this ceremony came from 17 different nationalities. They were individuals and families who were all very excited about becoming Australians.

Prior to this ceremony I had people come to me expressing their disappointment with the comments from Senator Fraser Anning. It is repulsive that Annastacia Palaszczuk rewards the Katter party with five staff. It is time for the Premier to end this arrangement today—not to review it, to end this arrangement today.