




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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ADJOURNMENT

Woodridge Electorate

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning) (6.09 pm): Woodridge is one of the most culturally diverse communities in the country. A third of the community is born overseas and more than 200 languages and dialects are spoken in our area. The vibrancy of our community and our rich cultural traditions and diversity define who we are.

Sadly, our cohesion is under threat. Bigotry has been championed in the federal parliament as a human right, and racial vilification celebrated as the manifestation of free speech. Queensland Senator Anning's recent maiden speech is just the latest example. While there is now a leadership vacuum in Canberra—or it would be better called leadership chaos—the impact of this public expression of prejudice is still reverberating around the Woodridge community.

We must stand up and speak out—both in defence of what we have achieved and for the kind of society we hope to become. We should not argue that we are tolerant of difference; we are that difference—that mix, that diversity, that cultural kaleidoscope. That is what it means to be Australian. That is what it means to be Woodridge.

In my privileged position as the member for Woodridge, I am honoured to work with a range of leaders from east, west, south and central African communities, including Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Tanzania, Kenya, Sudan, Sierra Leone, just to name a few; the Middle-East, including Syria, Iran and Lebanon; the Pacific region, including Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Tokelau, Tuvalu and the Cook Islands; and Asia, including Taiwan, Cambodia, India and the Philippines.

Just last weekend I joined the Burmese community in their festival which attracted more than 1,000 members of our community, both Burmese and non-Burmese. Last weekend I also joined the member for Waterford and our community at Marsden State High School for the opening of their new centre of excellence, funded by our government. Marsden State High School is one of the most multicultural schools in Queensland, led by passionate and engaging teachers who work together to deliver outstanding achievements across-the-board.

Ms Grace: Great school.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection from the Minister for Education. It is a fantastic school.

It is the camaraderie of multicultural communities like Marsden State High School, and communities like Woodridge that should give us all hope for a brighter future. In closing, I believe that the distinctions some may look to make based on faith, religion, language, skin colour or place of origin deny the fundamental democratic belief that all human beings have a right to life, liberty, security and happiness. We must all remember that we are united by a common humanity and bound by a common aspiration, and representing Woodridge reminds me of that every day.