




Speech By
Cynthia Lui

MEMBER FOR COOK

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mareeba Multicultural Festival

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (2.05 pm): The Mareeba Multicultural Festival is a major calendar event that takes place annually. On 25 August I had the absolute pleasure of representing Minister Stirling Hinchliffe, the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, at the official opening of the 2018 Mareeba Multicultural Festival. It was an honour to take part in this year's event to mark 20 years of celebrating cultural diversity in the region. We should be proud that people from all over the world have chosen to make Queensland their home. According to the 2016 census, there has been a 64 per cent net increase in migration over 10 years with people now calling Mareeba home. In doing so, they have created the vibrant and culturally diverse society that makes Mareeba what it is today.

With August recognised as Queensland Multicultural Month, I could not have picked a better time to host the festival to celebrate the many cultural backgrounds that make up our state's identity. It would not be right for me to tell the House about the Mareeba Multicultural Festival without shining light on the festival's history. I would like to acknowledge the commitment and dedication of Mr Giuliano Cordenos, someone who is very passionate about cultural diversity, community and bringing people together. Twenty years ago Giuliano casually showed up for a town hall meeting and walked out of that meeting with the responsibility to pull together a festival to encompass the region's cultural diversity.

With the title of chairperson of the organising committee—a position he has held for the past 20 years—and \$1,000 in funds, he went on to host the very first festival with half a dozen performers. Each year the festival came with a theme to promote unity. The Mareeba Multicultural Festival is now one of the most successful calendar events in the region. This year was its largest event yet, with over 30 performances through songs and dance, exotic food and the local community coming out to share and celebrate each other in culture.

The Palaszczuk government supported the Mareeba Multicultural Festival over the past three years through the Celebrating Multicultural Queensland Program. The Celebrating Multicultural Queensland Program currently supports around 130 events and projects across the state and has doubled the annual budget for this highly popular program to \$2 million a year from 2018-19. Events like this help to promote community cohesion and to strengthen our understanding of cultural diversity and the many benefits it brings to our community.

It was wonderful to see the Mareeba community come out in force to celebrate cultural diversity. I would like to congratulate Giuliano Cordenos and the Mareeba Multicultural Festival organising committee for putting on another fantastic event and, in particular, for celebrating 20 years of this festival and still going strong. I am proud to be part of a government that is committed to promoting Queensland's multiculturalism as a true champion for safe and inclusive society for all Queenslanders.