



Speech By  
**Jessica Pugh**


**MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY**

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Record of Proceedings, 1 May 2018

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Fall of Saigon, Commemoration Service**

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (7.03 pm): Yesterday afternoon I was honoured to represent the Palaszczuk government at the Vietnamese commemoration of the fall of Saigon honouring the Australian and Vietnamese soldiers who fought there and the civilians who lost their lives. I want to thank the Queensland chapter of the Vietnamese community in Australia, led by Dr Bui and his truly wonderful team of volunteers, like QI, Bac Lam and Phuong Nguyen.

At the conclusion of the Vietnam War, approximately three million South Vietnamese fled the country. There is no firm figure to account for how many Vietnamese lost their lives when they fled. However, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, up to half a million people may have died. I must admit that the true scale and horror that the Vietnamese community faced in fleeing was not clear to me until I watched a documentary earlier this year with my Vietnamese community, *Vietnamerica*, which is an eye-opening view into the truly staggering journey that many people have faced to be here today and a must see.

My partner's parents were two such refugees who made this long and perilous journey. Lan and Tan left Vietnam by boat and arrived in Australia with nothing more than the clothes on their backs. Everything else they had was taken by pirates at sea. Sadly, they were counted amongst the lucky ones as countless more perished at sea and never arrived at their destination. Nonetheless, they first stayed at the Wacol camps in the electorate of Inala before moving to a home in Durack and then to Sinnamon Park in my electorate of Mount Ommaney, which they call home today. They have worked hard their entire lives, allowing their son and daughter to study at the local Catholic school in Darra, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, both of their children going on to complete tertiary studies. My partner has made his parents very proud in going on to become a doctor.

I have said it before in this place and I will say it again: education has allowed not just my partner but countless other members of my local community to excel in their chosen paths and do our entire community proud. The community of Mount Ommaney is an exceptionally welcoming place and, indeed, our Vietnamese community is so prolific in the Mount Ommaney electorate that the most common last name in both of my state high schools is Nguyen. I am proud to be the local member for such a diverse community and I thank the Vietnamese community for its strong contribution to our local area and for welcoming me as their local member.