




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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MOTION

Immigration

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (3.16 pm): I am a proud Australian. I want to speak about my family, about citizenship and about my constituency, Surfers Paradise. I came on a boat from another country—from Holland—in 1962. My father is Dutch and my mother is American but she has Russian and Jewish heritage. When they came through Egypt, because her maiden name is Weissman she was not allowed to get off the boat in Egypt as that was the name of the first president of Israel.

Mum and Dad came to Boonah in the electorate of Scenic Rim. I imagine that would have been pretty challenging in 1962. My dad got a job at Boonah State School. My mum was from Church Avenue, Brooklyn, in New York. Eventually, we ended up at Burleigh Heads State School where my dad was a teacher. Mum was an Avon lady, so we would be up and down the coast in the afternoons doing deliveries of Avon products on the way home. The important thing was that my parents taught us—my sister, Kate, and me—about the importance of hard work and of putting back into the community, as we just heard from the member for Stretton.

We subsequently moved to the electorate of Stretton where we completed our high schooling and went to university. Kate went to Salisbury State High School and I went to Sunnybank State High School. Kate worked at Coles Woodridge and I worked at Coles Pinelands Plaza. Importantly, our parents taught us to put back into the community. Subsequently Kate went to QUT next door and became a journalist and has pursued a career in radio broadcasting, and I of course ended up as a dental surgeon after being at UQ and then came into this place.

I came from another country on a boat called 'the Orange', or *Oranje*, which was the Dutch name for orange. Like many, many thousands of other Australians who came in that era post the war, we stayed with friends at Fruitgrove; we did not stay in the camp out at Wacol at that time. We stayed at Fruitgrove until we got sent to Boonah. Dad had to go down to the Treasury building—now the casino—because they would not give him a job unless they checked that he actually could speak good enough English. People from Boonah have said to me, 'We remember him; his nickname was Dutchie.' I imagine that the English of some of the other people who did not get a job when my dad did must have been particularly bad.

Importantly, Dad, who is 86 now, and Mum, who is 82, taught us what citizenship is about: respect, harmony, tolerance and acceptance. With our diverse multicultural background that is all that we have ever felt. I look forward to the citizenship ceremonies I attend. I often say that people at those ceremonies sometimes have a greater appreciation of citizenship because it has been awarded to them. Sometimes they have left battles behind. All I ever say to them is, 'Please leave all of your battles behind, but bring all of the good aspects of your society, your country and your nation with you.' I remember my own citizenship ceremony very well. It was on Australia Day in 1996 at Mermaid Beach. The important thing about these citizenship ceremonies is that we welcome the vast diversity of

diasporas we have from other countries. It is so important that we reject the hate speech that we may have heard or that we may be tempted to nod along with. That is why it is important to be at the sensible centre and not to the left or the right.

When it comes to my electorate, the point I want to make is that if 20 per cent of Queenslanders were born elsewhere that is a million, but in Surfers Paradise it is 34.5 per cent. As Rob Borbidge, one of my predecessors, said in 1998 when he rejected One Nation, obviously when we have such a great number of people in a constituency who speak another language, who have come from other places and contribute so much to our state and country, it is so important that we take the sensible centre. We must ensure that we appreciate all of the great aspects of life in Australia. We cannot accept what people say in other places or even in this place. As I look across the chamber I see, I hope, friends on the other side who are also from different multicultural backgrounds, but we can all work together. It is so important that we do. It is so important that we as community leaders do that to show that this is a multicultural society. We want people to bring the best of what they have, leave their battles behind and make a better Queensland and Australia.