




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Record of Proceedings, 23 August 2018

MOTION

Immigration

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (3.31 pm): I fully support this motion and I utterly reject the amendment and the sentiments put forward by Senator Fraser Anning. I am proud to represent a community that is multicultural. It includes our original Australians and people who have arrived more recently; people of every colour and creed; and people of all political beliefs. I am proud to represent a community that utterly rejects the notions that were put forward in that speech. We are a community that knows we can do better. The Australia that we believe in—the Australia that I believe in—rejects those notions. It is an Australia that opens its heart to people. It is an Australia that opens its hands and its wallet to help people. That is the Australia I believe in.

I do not take offence at some of the things that were said; I just want to talk about the absolutely positive benefits and state categorically that multiculturalism and immigration have been nothing but a success story for our community and this country. I want to give some examples.

My parents sponsored a Sri Lankan family to come to this country in the early 1970s and our families grew extremely close, referring to each other's parents as aunty and uncle. My uncle was a Rhodes Scholar. He became a distinguished public servant after starting his working life here driving a St Vinnies van as it was the only job he could get. He rose to become a very senior member of the Premier's department in the 1980s. My aunty was a radiographer. They had sons who now make contributions in veterinary science, education, small business, nursing, security and the arts. Both my aunty and uncle made huge contributions to the community of Kedron through their commitment to the Little Flower Church in Kedron and the community surrounding it.

I want to talk about my Somali friend. We met at a street stall in 2004. He came up and asked how he could put an end to the politics of division and hate. He had been an interpreter for the ADF and had been evacuated due to the danger to his life. He knew about the politics of division and hate and where that ends. He spent many years in a Kenyan refugee camp before coming here. He became a leader in his community, setting up community groups and small businesses. Nowadays he is back in Somalia—a very dangerous place still—using the skills he developed here to help rebuild that country. What a brave man.

Due to my limited Spanish-speaking skills I have become great friends with many Spanish-speaking immigrants from Latin American countries such as Colombia, El Salvador, Uruguay and Chile. Two of my best friends arrived with nothing but a child to care for. After learning the language they worked in a range of low-paid jobs before starting a business. The husband has now commenced his role as a member of the Queensland police.

I meet many recent immigrants in my work as a volunteer nurse at the multicultural health service in Stones Corner, the World Wellness Group. We care for people who often have never seen a doctor or a nurse in their life. They have significant health problems. They have suffered serious trauma and

torture. The questions they always ask are: what can I bring to this community; what can I contribute to this community; and how can I be a part of this community? We are richer for these people becoming part of our community.

In my electorate I have churches, mosques, Buddhist temples and synagogues. I have people of various religious faiths and people of no faith at all. Unlike those people who showed up at the Kuraby mosque to harass people who were doing nothing more than practising their faith in a peaceful manner, in my community we respect each other, we try to understand each other and we view each other as people before we put any labels on each other.

I grew up in a community that was effectively an insular Irish Catholic community. That was even though one of my grandmothers was German and the other was of Northern Irish Protestant descent. In the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, when people who share my cultural heritage were using terrorism and violence, I was spared what is happening to Muslims in this country now. I never had to apologise for the actions of the IRA. Nobody ever called for a ban on Irish immigration or condemned our religion. My parents condemned every action of the IRA and prayed for every victim and prayed for peace. I know that my friends in the Muslim community do the same. They are supported in this by Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Baha'is, Sikhs, atheists and agnostics.

My community utterly rejects the politics of division and hate. Many in my community know where that leads. We reject that because we believe in an Australia that is better than that. We believe in an Australia that cares for people. We believe in an Australia that helps people. We believe in an Australia that respects people.