




Speech By
Hon. Leeanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

Record of Proceedings, 23 August 2018

MOTION

Immigration

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts) (3.42 pm): I rise in support of the motion moved by the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and I respectfully reject the amendments moved by the member for Traeger.

Just over 20 years ago Pauline Hanson's maiden speech thrust this nation into a crossroads—a crossroads about our relationship to the notion of multiculturalism, to our relationship with our first nations people in this country. Even though since then there has been a great deal of work to move ourselves away from that crossroads, just last week what we had from the Katter's Australian Party senator was a further thrusting into the crossroads. For those who have remained in those crossroads over the years, they have remained too long and now we have what are extreme right ideologies hurtling towards those crossroads attempting to divide Australia and drive us back to a time that we cannot return to, quite frankly, because it is impossible. It does not exist anymore.

In the member for Traeger's amendments he talks about Australians having a right to discriminate and he talks about the right of Australians to have the ultimate say on who enters our country. What Australians is he talking about? Every Australian, unless you are a first nation person, is of the multicultural persuasion. You are all multicultural unless you are first nation. Last week when we saw that disgraceful attempt to divide Australia with racism and hatred I was disgusted. The comments of Katter's Australian Party senator, Senator Fraser Anning, were vile and go against everything that generations of Australians from all cultural backgrounds have been working for. Senator Anning said—

We as a nation are entitled to insist that those who are allowed to come here predominantly reflect the historic European Christian composition of Australian society and embrace our language, culture and values as a people.

As a proud Aboriginal woman, I want to tell Senator Anning about my people's language, culture and values. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people lived in this country, cared for our environment and maintained cultural practices on these lands for thousands of generations before European settlement and certainly before Senator Anning formed his narrow-minded view about what it means to be an Australian. Both sides of politics have condemned Senator Anning's comments which demonstrates how far he has strayed from majority opinion.

On top of those comments from Senator Anning, the federal LNP is, on this very day, deciding on a new leader for its party and I have concerns about the values of our perhaps soon-to-be Prime Minister Peter Dutton and his views with regard to race. In 2008 Mr Dutton boycotted Kevin Rudd's apology to the stolen generations. He was one of only a handful of MPs and the only coalition frontbencher who refused to attend this most important moment in Australia's history. In 2010 he said he regarded it as something which was not going to deliver tangible outcomes. A man who holds these views should not be Prime Minister of Australia. It distresses me that racism is still prevalent in this country. We see it in the comments of some politicians in moments like this, we see it out on the street, we see it in the member for Stretton's electorate in the story that he retold today and we see it in the

media. Just today there are reports that a radio broadcaster used the offensive 'n' word during his broadcast. It is this kind of racist response that seeps out like a disease when politicians promote hatred and division.

Australia is better than that. Queensland is better than that. We have come a long way, but there is still more work to be done and we need the right leaders in our communities and in federal parliament to unite our country and embrace our diversity, to support the notion to acknowledge the historic dismantling of the White Australia policy—a policy that is a blight on our history—to recognise that since 1973 Australia has pursued a racially non-discriminatory immigration policy to the overwhelming benefit of our country, and to give our unqualified commitment to the principle that the criteria of immigration intake in Australia will never be based on race, faith or ethnic origin. I call on all members to support the motion.