




Speech By
Rob Molhoek

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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MOTION

Immigration

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (3.36 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion. I certainly will not be supporting the amendment that has been moved by the Katter's Australian Party. We are a nation of immigrants. We heard a little of the heritage of the member for Surfers Paradise and the Premier, the member for Inala. I share some of the heritage of the Premier. Like her grandfather, my father spent four years in a German POW camp. He would have used the same language that the Premier's grandfather would have used: he was happy to be somewhere that was safe, to have a roof over his head, to have food, to have his family with him and to be in a country with such wonderful freedoms.

I googled a little bit of the history of the time in which that camp operated. I have had the displeasure of reading it. Some 88,000 Jewish people perished in that camp over a three- or four-year period. My father was not one of them. He was not a Jew; he was a member of the Dutch air force and he was there as a worker. When the Americans came and liberated the camp and built another camp beside it, my father spent six months in a hospital camp before he could make the trip back to Holland to his family after the war.

I cannot believe that we even have to debate these matters in the House today. I think it is embarrassing that in a country as great, rich and bounteous as Australia we are having this debate. Warren Buffett once said, 'How dare we be so exclusive about our country when some of us have just had the privilege of winning ovarian lotto?' Some of us are here by chance, some by good luck and some because our families came before us. To be here debating such a discriminatory matter I think is an incredibly sad day.

I want to put something on the record, because I think it is an important commentary to make. I share the local mosque with the member for Bonney. Hussin and Rashida Goss often joke about the fact that sometimes people turn up and say, 'Why won't you Muslims all go back to where you come from?'

Hussin will often say, 'Well, actually, I could, but I'd only be going a few blocks away to Labrador to Goss Avenue,' because he and his family have been on the Gold Coast for 110 years. His great-grandfather migrated here in the late 1800s. He is now a fourth generation Gold Coaster. He is the President of the Gold Coast Islamic Society and it is a credit to him and the other committee members that he works with and the community that they have that there are some 70 different nationalities represented in that one mosque. While we are talking about the diversity of the Gold Coast, I should also comment on the fact that we are without a doubt one of the most multicultural cities in Australia. Some 200 different nationalities are represented on the Gold Coast.

I can only condemn the commentary from Senator Anning and the Katter party. I also remind the House about the appalling commentary of One Nation. First we heard Pauline Hanson condemning Asians and then she changed tack when she got back into the Senate and started condemning Muslims. As we heard from the Premier this morning, there are some 135,000 international students studying in our state. In fact, I believe that the second biggest export earner for our country now is international education followed closely by tourism. Who makes up the fastest growing tourism categories that we see on the Gold Coast? It is Asians. It is people from Korea and from Japan and from China and Malaysia and other parts of the region.

It is just unacceptable that as a nation we would even dare to stand in such arrogance and send such a strong message to other nations and other races that they are not welcome in our country. I want to say on the public record here today in this chamber that people from all around the world, if they are prepared to embrace our good fortune and our lifestyle and come and befriend us and work with us, are more than welcome. In fact, I believe that we should be a nation that is known for being tolerant of everyone regardless of their religion, their race or their country of origin. I certainly will not be supporting the amendments that have been proposed by the Katter party in the House today. I will be supporting the motion that has been moved and I simply ask that others support that motion as well.