




Speech By
Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

Record of Proceedings, 23 August 2018

MOTION

Immigration

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (3.02 pm): I move—

That this House:

1. acknowledge the historic action of the Holt government, with bipartisan support from the Australian Labor Party, in initiating the dismantling of the White Australia Policy;
2. recognise that, since 1973, successive Labor and Liberal/National party governments have, with bipartisan support, pursued a racially non-discriminatory immigration policy to the overwhelming national, and international, benefit of Australia; and
3. give its unambiguous and unqualified commitment to the principle that, whatever criteria are applied by Australian governments in exercising their sovereign right to determine the composition of the immigration intake, race, faith or ethnic origin shall never, explicitly or implicitly, be among them.

At the outset, I want to acknowledge the member for Nanango's repudiation of Senator Fraser Anning's maiden speech to the federal parliament. Along with all on this side of the House, I totally condemn and utterly reject Senator Anning's divisive and inflammatory remarks. Further, I acknowledge that the motion I move today is a near carbon copy of a motion moved by the then prime minister, Bob Hawke, in federal parliament almost exactly 30 years ago, on 25 August 1988. At that time, some 22 years after the dismantling of the White Australia policy, Australia's non-discriminatory immigration policy was coming under attack—on that occasion by John Howard. How very, very sad it is that this is happening over half a century after we as a nation—wise to the benefits of a diverse Australia—completely repudiated a racist immigration policy. How very, very myopic is the view of Fraser Anning. He has closed his mind to the rich tapestry of today's Australia—the rich cultural contribution—and in fact to the reality of today's Australia, today's Queensland.

Over one million Queenslanders were either born overseas or have a parent who was born overseas. It may come as news to Senator Anning but Australia is right now a diverse nation and Queensland is a diverse state. We cannot undo it—we cannot and we will not. We do not count our immigrants, we do not separate them, we simply accept them and we celebrate them and we celebrate our diversity.

Many members attended an important function at the parliament here last night to celebrate the Japan Community of Queensland's inauguration, where it was noted that the Japanese were here as early as the 1870s. It is unlikely we would have Queensland's sugar industry and the magnificent contribution it has made to our state's economy without Australian South Sea islanders, without the religiously diverse people of South Asian ancestry and without our migrants from Italy, Malta and Crete. All our lives, regardless of nationality or ethnicity, have been enriched by the 1970s arrival of the Vietnamese.

In the same way as it is said that you cannot unscramble an egg, it is too late to turn back that sorry chapter in the nation's history that was the White Australia policy. In evoking the phrase 'final solution', Senator Anning stooped to a new low. In the context that they were used, these words were repugnant to those who suffered at the hands of that global evil in the 20th century and repugnant to those who fought against that evil in the 20th century.

Outliers like Anning are going to further and further extremes to have their voices heard because, sadly, so-called conservatives—and I do not believe they are genuine conservatives, because genuine conservatives would support our multicultural Australia—are going further than at any other time in our recent history to sow fear and division. The result is ugly dog whistling and xenophobia and an escalation in racist rhetoric to pander to the far-right fringes of Australian politics.

I am sad to say that I cannot think of any better example of that than from would-be prime minister Peter Dutton claiming in January that Melbourne residents are frightened of dining out because of African gang crime. This is dog whistling, pure and simple. It was echoed by an under-siege Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, who said that Melbourne residents cannot pretend Sudanese gangs do not exist and need to be dealt with by authorities—more dog whistling. They clearly did not tell Christopher Pyne, who laughed out loud when he was asked if he was afraid of going out at night in Melbourne. He had apparently forgotten that he was supposed to be terrified of Africans. It was Tony Abbott who first crossed the line in advocating for a return to white Australia when he said entire groups of migrants should not even be allowed into the country. He said, 'Why do we store up trouble for ourselves by letting in people'—

(Time expired)