



Speech By  
**Samuel O'Connor**


**MEMBER FOR BONNEY**

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## **PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

### **Gold Coast, Multiculturalism**

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (2.51 pm): The Gold Coast is proudly one of the most multicultural cities in Queensland. I would like to share some moments I have had with some of our communities over the last month. At the beginning of April we had the Labrador Harmony Day Festival. It was organised by Thia and the Kusuma Indonesian community and was full of colour and festivities and engaged people from all cultures in food and fun to spread the message of harmony.

Over Easter I had the privilege of being part of the Bengali New Year with the Bangladesh Association of Gold Coast. It is actually the year 1426 to them so they like to joke about how advanced they are. They put on a fabulous display of their rich culture and traditions. This is really important for their kids to keep a cultural connection because most of them were born in Australia. I have to admit that I did not understand a lot of it because it was in Bengali, but I did enjoy the performances and, of course, the food at the end. I thank the management committee for inviting me and for their ongoing work.

Last Friday I attended the 3Es to Freedom *Stories to Freedom* exhibition launch organised by coordinator Kesti Faulkner. It features photos, videos and stories of refugee and migrant women and shines a light on their 3Es to Freedom, focusing on education, employment and empowerment. A standout for me was a short film made by Jude Kalman, *Do You See All of Me?* The film captured the women getting ready for a photo shoot where many of them wore their traditional outfits. For me it moved them from being just another story to individual people who are just like you and me. This piece and so many others are a reminder of the racism that is often faced by new Australians when people cannot see beyond their skin colour or accent to instead see what potential a person has. I have gone along to this program and met with many of these incredible women at the Labrador Women's Space and I know the difference it makes.

On Saturday our local Sri Lankan community planned to celebrate the new year, but instead they stood with members of our community in remembrance of those who were killed in the recent Sri Lankan bombings. Thank you to President Sange, president of the Gold Coast Sri Lankans group, and to the Southport Labrador Cricket Club for hosting. It was a great show of support with the ever-present queen of multiculturalism on the Gold Coast, Cornelia Babbage, helping to bring everyone together, as she did at the Gold Coast mosque. Cornelia's work with our multicultural communities, as a migrant herself, through the Multicultural Families Organisation is second to none. She knows everyone and has a sense of when we most need to show solidarity and unity. I thank her for all of her hard work and for truly being a leader of positive change.

Across my communities I want to make sure that we stamp out any racism, fear of religion or segregation of cultures. Most of us do it well, but the attacks that we have seen in the last two months around the world remind us that we need to keep trying to stamp out fear.