




Speech By
David Janetzki

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH

Record of Proceedings, 2 September 2021

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Toowoomba, Afghan Community

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.39 pm): Today I would like to speak about the diversity of Toowoomba. I have spoken about that regularly, but there is one community in particular that has had a very difficult time over the last couple of weeks and that is our Afghan community. I would like to speak a little bit about the contribution they make and the concerns that run deep right throughout our Afghan community.

I look at the youth members for Toowoomba South and Toowoomba North over the last couple of years, Afghan refugees Lena and Mahsa Nabizada. I think about the leadership on display from Rahila, a former high school leader at Harristown State High School, who is now a USQ law student. I think about Zimra, our little 'Afghani Axe' and an amazing little Aussie Rules player who is making great strides in the big smoke of Brisbane.

The Afghan community in Toowoomba has come together as one with deep concern in their hearts. Over the last two weeks 50 families have gone through HumeRidge Church under the leadership of Ross Savill. These people are deeply concerned about what they are seeing, as we all are, in the traumatic images of Afghanistan on the coalition withdrawal. They have seen their families and their communities in Afghanistan damaged by the rule now of the Taliban. They are concerned and they desperately want to see their families brought to Australia or to another safe haven so they can be protected and look forward to a brighter future.

I think of Annie and Ruth, lawyers who are doing an amazing job. I have made representations in respect of the paperwork that many of these Afghan families, who are deeply concerned about their relatives who remain behind, simply cannot get their hands on as their family members are in hiding, terrified for their lives in the wake of the Taliban rule in Afghanistan. There is much that needs to be done to support these families as they go about trying to get out of Afghanistan wherever possible. Our community in Toowoomba has come together—not just at HumeRidge and not just with young lawyers like Annie and Ruth. I also think of Rahila, who is now a USQ law student, who is putting in time and effort. She is absolutely committed to getting as many of her family and friends into safety, whether that be in Toowoomba or elsewhere in refuge.

I also want to acknowledge the efforts of our veterans. I think of our colleague the member for Buderim and I think of Josh Hawkins in the Toowoomba community, who pulled together a group of veterans who met at The Spotted Cow for a catch-up. I think it is important that we say to our veterans that their efforts were not in vain, that the cause of fighting to protect freedom, promote freedom and advance freedom is never in vain. I want to give a shout-out to our veterans and our entire Toowoomba community that stands with our Afghan community.