




Speech By
James Martin

MEMBER FOR STRETTON

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ADJOURNMENT

Stretton Electorate, Onam Celebration

 **Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (9.18 pm): The electorate of Stretton is lucky to be home to so many different multicultural communities. Our community benefits so much from this and one of the biggest benefits is the vast range of cultural celebrations we get to enjoy. One I want to recognise today is Onam, which was celebrated by the Indian Kerala community last weekend. I take this opportunity to wish all members in this House a happy Onam. In accordance with the traditional blessing, may you all enjoy good health and happiness and may the colour and lights of Onam bring abundance and prosperity in your life.

Onam is the festival of Kerala, a state in southern India, and it is observed by Malayali people, and many have migrated from there and settled in my local area. It is a harvest festival with roots back to Indian mythology and it commemorates the legend of King Mahabali. It is a true multicultural festival and is celebrated by Christians, Hindus and Muslims alike. The celebration includes singing, dancing, games and a traditional Indian feast, known as a onasadhya, which consists of a variety of traditional vegetarian dishes served on a banana leaf.

I was very pleased to join Kairali Brisbane Inc., who organised this event for this delicious feast. I commend the chef Shaju Kalavara and my Malayali friends who were very helpful in pointing out some of the dishes which would no doubt be too spicy for me. I can report to the House that I was a big fan of the caramel coconut lentils—the only time I have ever enjoyed lentils. The meal is traditionally eaten with your hands, which I did attempt, but was grateful to the organisers for slipping me a spoon after I made a terrible mess of it.

The event was a great success and I want to commend the organisers of the Kairali Brisbane Inc. the Ayalkootam organisation, the Malayalee Association of Queensland, the Brisbane Malayalee Association, the Brisbane's Best Friends and Association. Also congratulations go to the president, Tom Joseph; secretary, Simon Mulangani; the treasurer, Arun Kalluparampil; Shaji Teckanath; Vivek; Omana Benny; Dr Preeti Suraj; and Shyni Joy for your hard work. The event has been going in Brisbane since 2009 and is growing every year. I have attended in previous years and look forward to attending many more.

I also want to particularly recognise one of the organisers, Mr Shaji Theckanath from the Kerala community, for his hard work. Sadly, he could not attend this year's Onam Festival because his daughter attends St Thomas More College and the family is dutifully carrying out their quarantine. To Shaji and all the St Thomas More families, I say we are thinking of you. It is great to be able to hold these multicultural celebrations and events like this in Stretton and it is only possible due to the great leadership of our Premier and her commitment to keeping Queenslanders safe.