



Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Record of Proceedings, 26 May 2022

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (3.52 pm): I too rise to address report No. 22 of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, *Inquiry into serious vilification and hate crimes*. I do so as a member of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee at the time that this review was undertaken. At the outset I want to commend the member for Toohey for his leadership throughout this, and I will come back to that in a moment.

I like a joke. I am a dad after all. It is a responsibility that us dads have. I usually like a lot of self-deprecating jokes. I like a good debate. I like a witty play on words, even a witty exchange of ideas and words, but I have never understood the need to vilify or express hatred to someone. I put that down to perhaps my upbringing.

I was very fortunate to have watched my father resettle Vietnamese boat people when we lived in Melbourne. I watched him work alongside Indigenous families and communities during our time in New South Wales. We welcomed South Pacific islanders into our family home. I ended up moving to and working in places like Tonga and Fiji for a period. I have grown up in more multicultural cities like Melbourne and Sydney. It has always been quite natural for me to understand that there are people who do not look like me, who worship different gods from me, who are a different gender—and that is what makes this world a beautiful place. It came as quite a shock to hear some of what continues to go on in society.

Like the member for Toohey and yourself, Madam Deputy Speaker Bush, I want to thank all of those people who put in submissions including the video submissions that you yourself, Madam Deputy Speaker, spent a lot of time working through, and those who appeared before the committee. I was absolutely sickened by some of the things that I heard.

Time is not going to permit me to go through all of the recommendations the committee has put forward. I do commend the report to all members in this House. What I did discover is that, whilst we do have laws across a range of legislation that are designed to prosecute individuals who vilify or undertake a crime based around hatred, they are possibly not understood; that they are not easily accessed; that there is potentially not the training required within police, the community or the justice system as to how they are best acted upon; and that records are not necessarily kept that specify when a crime falls under these categories rather than under run-of-the-mill Criminal Code convictions. What we learnt was that in many cases, because of things like having to get approval before they could undertake action against these kinds of existing laws, police would revert to the standard Criminal Code prosecution which meant that we had no way of really understanding when a hate crime occurred or when serious vilification occurred.

There are a number of recommendations that may seem very technical, but I think they will go some way to addressing the concerns in the community. I think the recommendations around education—education within the community, education within the peak bodies that represent many of

our multicultural groups and our community centres, and education within the Police Service and within the justice system—is where the real benefit will be achieved. Those recommendations have been made. I commend them to the various government organisations and community organisations that they impact upon and ask that they give them due consideration.

It is my hope that, as a result of the testimony shared by those who came and spoke before the committee, as a result of the information that has been put together in this report and as a result of the recommendations that the committee has put forward, all of Queensland can end up in the same position that I operate from and that I opened my contribution with. We are a richer state and we are a richer nation because we bring together people from all around the world as well as the traditional owners of this land we live in. We are richer for it. We will continue to be richer for it. The day we can get rid of serious vilification and hatred will be a day when we will be an even better state and nation than we already are.