




Speech By
James Martin

MEMBER FOR STRETTON

Record of Proceedings, 18 August 2022

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (3.31 pm): I rise to support the committee report No. 22 of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee into serious vilification and hate crimes. I would like to congratulate the committee for their work. Although I am not a member of the committee, I want to commend them for their hard work on this very important report.

I believe this inquiry into serious vilification and hate crimes and the report that the committee has provided to the parliament are a living testament to the former member for Stretton, Duncan Pegg. Duncan was a proud supporter of multiculturalism, but he went further than that. Even though my electorate is a multicultural success story, sometimes unfortunately people do the wrong thing. Duncan spoke out against the 'no mosque' signs that went up along Warrigal Road in Runcorn at Warrigal Farms across from the Runcorn State High School. He spoke passionately about that in this place, and I remember being here and watching it. It brought him to tears, and I know many people in this place were close to tears—hearing how those Muslim students must have felt going to school right past those signs that were put up.

In addition, Duncan stood up for a very well-known local Muslim woman who was being harassed at a local restaurant. This was something that Duncan was publicly recognised for by members of my community at his farewell at SunPAC. I would like to thank the chair, Peter Russo, for recognising Duncan's work standing up against racism in his time as the member for Stretton.

Multiculturalism works and it benefits us all. The diversity that it brings is a strength to my local area and it is a strength to the whole of Queensland. The Stretton electorate is a multicultural success story made up of fantastic, hardworking people of many different backgrounds, cultures and religions. People have come from all over the world to settle in our vibrant, diverse and multicultural suburbs deep on the south side of Brisbane. In fact the Stretton electorate has the highest proportion of people born overseas in the state, and it also has the highest proportion of people who speak a language other than English at home. These are people who value hard work, family and, importantly, education. This can be seen in the census figures. Along with the diverse range of backgrounds and languages, people in Stretton outperform the Queensland average when it comes to higher education or household income.

For many in my local area, their journey here was about securing a better life. That is true of so many people I know in Stretton. There are people from many different backgrounds—Chinese, Taiwanese, Korean, Japanese, Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Middle Eastern, South-East Asian or European heritage. They all tell me the same story; they all tell me how proud they are that their children are doing very well at school and they all have ambitions and hopes for their children to go on and have successful jobs, start businesses or whatever it might be.

It is a place where I see multiculturalism working. It is a place where people of all different backgrounds can celebrate Christmas, Eid, Diwali, Chinese New Year, Onam or Buddha's birthday. One of the only side effects of being the member for Stretton is that there is too much delicious food on

the menu and sometimes I find that I overeat. I am encouraged when I see many different groups from all different backgrounds celebrating together—such as people from the local Islamic school celebrating Chinese New Year and people from the many different Chinese community groups celebrating Eid. It works really well.

However, unfortunately, there are some people who do not do the right thing. I am sorry to say that, even in my community, people can be targeted simply because of the colour of their skin or their religion. That is why we need laws that deal with serious vilification and hate crimes. Duncan supported that and I do too. An example of this was raised by a well-known Islamic leader from my community, Ali Kadri, who highlighted that there had been instances where mosques had been targeted by people but they were only charged with wilful damage because there was nothing in the Criminal Code that identified that kind of hate crime.

The report outlines 17 recommendations, including widening vilification provisions and ensuring laws cover religion, race, sex, gender, disability and medical status. I look forward to the government's close consideration of all of these recommendations. Finally, as the member for Toohey and chair of the committee said—

This report is dedicated to the memory of Mr Duncan Pegg ... the former colourful and 'colourblind' Member for Stretton, who believed that all people should be treated as equal, regardless of the colour of their skin, their ethnic background or their religious belief.

We hope that it—

... embodies the spirit of equality, community, acceptance and inclusivity for which Mr Pegg was so well renowned in his electorate.