



Speech By
Lance McCallum

MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

Record of Proceedings, 18 August 2022

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (3.23 pm): We recognise the valuable and extraordinary contributions that individuals and organisations from so many diverse backgrounds make to our communities, and that is the basis of why we are so committed to a strong and unified Queensland that is fair, harmonious and inclusive. The reality is that there is still a lot of racism, there is a lot of vilification and there is a lot of negativity directed towards people from vulnerable groups who are made to feel alone, isolated and less than.

Given this reality, prior to the last state election we made a commitment to refer the Cohesive Communities Coalition's options paper to a parliamentary committee for further review and consultation. In April last year we delivered on that commitment and referred the matter of serious vilification and hate crimes to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee. Madam Deputy Chair, I would like to acknowledge your contribution as well as all committee members. It is a firm example of real action to make sure that Queensland's vilification and hate crime laws reflect our commitment to a fair and inclusive community for all Queenslanders. We do have existing laws and frameworks to deal with hate crimes, racism and discrimination, but still it persists in our community. Every Queenslander should feel that reporting hate incidents and crime is worth the effort and will lead to some kind of outcome. To ensure that, we need to make sure our laws are effective and provide the right protections.

We are also committed to ensuring that all voices are heard and that any potential changes to our laws in Queensland are properly informed by the views and experiences of a diverse range of Queenslanders. I would like to congratulate and thank the individuals and organisations that took the time to participate in the inquiry. I will mention one organisation and one person in particular: Beny Bol from the Queensland African Communities Council. Beny was a submitter to the committee. I have the privilege of having the QACC in my electorate at Redbank Plains. I have a strong relationship with Beny Bol, who is a wonderful African community leader and who does incredible work both in the African community and the broader community in fostering a real sense of sharing and understanding.

It was so confronting—and unfortunately familiar in some respects—to read about the impacts of hate crimes and vilification. We have heard specific examples from some of the previous speakers. The report revealed that impacts include things such as stress, difficulty sleeping, heart palpitations, hopelessness, suicidal ideation, feeling anxious, feeling less than, impacts on mental health, not feeling safe, not feeling valued and definitely not feeling respected.

The victims of vilification and hate crimes are left feeling intimidated, vulnerable and in fear for their own safety and the safety of their families whilst being made to feel guilty and like outsiders. They are made to feel like they do not belong in our society when they absolutely do. There are genuine, actual and psychological impacts as a result of these crimes that leave victims with ongoing trauma. In some cases I was absolutely horrified—but not surprised—to learn that people have resigned from their jobs, are afraid to go out or are diagnosed and medicated for mental health disorders as a result of the suffering and vilification they have experienced. I very much look forward to contributing to the legislation when it is brought forward in this House.