




Speech By
Hon. Leanne Linard

MEMBER FOR NUDGEES

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Migrant Engineers; Multicultural Affairs, International Women's Day

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (11.13 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring Queenslanders from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have the backing they need to thrive. Recently I launched a new guide for Queensland businesses and employers to attract and retain skilled engineers from migrant backgrounds.

Overseas born engineers living in Australia make up close to 60 per cent of Australia's engineering workforce. However, they have a higher rate of unemployment, take longer to find employment in engineering occupations and are more likely to be underemployed than Australian born engineers. Research also shows that 48 per cent of skilled migrants are not using the skills or experience they gained before arriving in this country. They face barriers including language, cultural misunderstandings and a lack of relevant Australian experience. At a time when skills shortages are impacting sectors across the economy, we must better utilise their skills.

The guide titled *Attracting and retaining engineers from migrant backgrounds* is the culmination of a partnership between Engineers Australia, my department and Minister Farmer's Department of Employment, Small Business and Training. It explores ways of maximising employment opportunities for underutilised migrants and refugees that can help to address industry workforce shortages in the engineering industry in Queensland. Its development shows that together we can build stronger connections and improve access to local and global skills while recognising the economic benefits and opportunities that come from embracing the unique skills and experiences that migrants bring with them.

The guide has been well received by industry. I spoke to a number of engineers at the launch who are already connecting with potential employers. The guide is available for download from the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs website. I encourage members to encourage their employers to access the guide.

Last Wednesday was International Women's Day. I was thrilled to speak at the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland Women's Ethnic Network's inaugural breakfast. I would like to thank ECCQ Chief Executive Officer Lisa Ward and the two masters of ceremony, Elijah Buol and Claudia Sahba, for an excellent event. This important event celebrated women from many diverse backgrounds across Queensland who are in corporate organisations, government and the multicultural service sector. With an initial expectation of 100 attendees but with 240 in attendance and many others who wanted to come, I know this event will continue to grow.

Women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have made, and continue to make, significant contributions to the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of Queensland. When women come together, support, celebrate each other and unite in purpose, the capacity for change is limitless. While there are many layers to the challenges women face, there is also much to celebrate as women

continue championing their rights and roles in society. We are stronger when we are united and together we must continue bringing attention to ongoing issues here and abroad such as gender equality, reproductive rights and violence and abuse against women.

It is now more important than ever to keep striving for communities free of bias, stereotypes and discrimination so we can see women thrive—indeed, all thrive—no matter where they are from. My sincere congratulations again go to the Women’s Ethic Network. It is a pleasure to work alongside them.