




Speech By
Peter Russo
MEMBER FOR TOOHEY

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ADJOURNMENT

Toohey Electorate, Chinese New Year

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (6.14 pm): *A language other than English was spoken.* This is a short speech that I normally give at the many lunar celebrations in my electorate. The translation is basically, 'Hello everyone. My name is Peter Russo. I am the member for Toohey. I wish everyone a happy new Year of the Rabbit. Wishing you happiness and prosperity. Wishing you good health. May you realise your ambitions. Wishing you good luck in the Year of the Rabbit. Thanks, everybody.'

As everyone knows, the rabbit is the Chinese zodiac animal representing longevity, peace and prosperity. Lunar New Year—also known as the Chinese New Year or spring festival—is a very important and widely celebrated holiday across my electorate. It is a time of great cultural and historical significance. It is a time to honour our ancestors. It is a time of family reunions, visiting relatives and friends, exchanging greetings for the coming new year and gathering together for feasting.

The festival emphasises the importance of family ties. It is a time of the year that I always look forward to. It is a great way to start the new year. This year Lunar New Year fell on Sunday, 22 January and celebrations culminated in the Lantern Festival on 5 February. COVID meant that many of these usual celebrations could not take place in 2022, but this year was different. I acknowledge the many associations and organisations across my community that held ceremonies and celebrations. I think I counted at least 14 of such gatherings during that period. The gatherings featured traditional lion dances and the exchange of red envelopes between people, symbolising prosperity and good wishes for the future, not to mention the feeding of some of these envelopes to the lions. The athletic ability of lion dancers is astounding. The celebrations were so catching that the members for Bundaberg, Stretton, Mount Ommaney, Bundamba and Pine Rivers happily joined in the festivities.