




Speech By
Hon. Charis Mullen

MEMBER FOR JORDAN

Record of Proceedings, 15 February 2024

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Community Cohesion

 **Hon. C MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (2.58 pm): As the Minister for Multicultural Affairs I am committed to a Queensland where everyone is supported to connect and contribute to their community and to belong. More than 22 per cent of Queensland's population were born overseas and more than 13.5 per cent of Queenslanders speak a language other than English at home. This confirms the richness and diversity of our state. It is vital we continue fostering welcoming and inclusive communities. Which brings me to the shocking death of Redbank Plains grandmother Vyleen White. Mrs White's death was tragic and senseless and we know the community is hurting. Our thoughts are with Mrs White's family and loved ones at this time of deep sadness. We must now let the criminal justice system do its job.

Queensland is a diverse state and we come from many different backgrounds. Our multiculturalism is one of the greatest strengths and something that we are very proud of. We are a stronger state because of this. Individuals are responsible for crimes, not their wider communities. Right now we are hearing of appalling incidents of racism and vilification, physically, online and through flyers into letterboxes. There is never a time for such actions. It is ugly, it is unacceptable and it is not what Queenslanders do.

These actions have no place in a diverse and multicultural Queensland and will not be tolerated. The new serious vilification and hate crimes legislation will come into effect this year. The new legislation will respond to the exact types of incidents we are hearing about. We should not engage in division. Instead, we should support those who have been deeply affected by this tragedy.

Following this tragic incident, I reached out to Beny Bol from the Queensland African Communities Council to offer my support and the support of Multicultural Affairs Queensland. MAQ has a strong and enduring relationship with the council and it is during times of crisis that these relationships come to the fore. Beny has done an outstanding job supporting the community in Redbank Plains. His leadership and the community's leadership must be commended. I also wish to thank Mrs White's daughter Cindy Micallef, who joined local African community leaders to call for unity amid rising tensions. That was an incredibly generous act at a time of deep grief.

I thank members of my Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council who made themselves available at short notice to offer their wise counsel to me on ongoing measures and support during this difficult time. I encourage every Queenslanders to stand together. Supporting one another has and will continue to get us through our toughest times.