




Speech By
Margaret Nightingale

MEMBER FOR INALA

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ADJOURNMENT

Fall of Saigon, 50th Anniversary

 **Mrs NIGHTINGALE** (Inala—ALP) (9.12 pm): I want to start by making some observations about how incredibly rude some members in this chamber are. The absolute lack of respect is just screaming across the chamber tonight.

Mr Mander interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr O'Shea): Member for Everton, you are now on a warning.

Mrs NIGHTINGALE: Today members of my community have gathered in solemn reflection, to mark a moment that has profoundly shaped generations. Fifty years ago, on 30 April 1975, Saigon fell to communist forces. For many, this date is not just a moment in history; it is a living memory of loss, upheaval and extraordinary courage. This day marked the end of the Vietnam War, but for millions it was the beginning of a long and uncertain journey, fleeing violence, persecution and repression.

Some took to the sea in fragile boats, facing storms, piracy and starvation. Others spent years in refugee camps, unsure if they would ever find peace again. The human cost was staggering: with an estimated 224,000 South Vietnamese soldiers losing their lives, over 600,000 wounded and more than 400,000 civilians perished. These are not just numbers; they are lives, families and futures lost. Yet from that immense suffering came remarkable resilience.

To the Vietnamese-Australian community, your journey did not end when you arrived on these shores. Here, you rebuilt. You raised families. You opened businesses. You became leaders. You brought strength, culture and compassion, and our nation is richer because of you. On behalf of the people of Inala, I thank you.

I also wish to pay tribute to Dr Cuong Bui, former president of the Vietnamese Community in Australia—Queensland Chapter. One of the first Vietnamese refugees to arrive in Australia after the war, he was a pillar of strength for so many. His recent passing is felt deeply, especially on this day. As we honour the past we must also face the present, because the pain remains and the fight for freedom in Vietnam continues.

We must not forget those who still pay a price for fighting for democracy. One of those is Pham Doan Trang, a courageous journalist and human rights advocate who was imprisoned for doing what we so often take for granted: writing freely and dreaming of a better future. Her bravery reminds us that democracy must never be taken for granted. As parliamentarians, we must speak out whether the threat is overt or it comes in the form of the slow erosion of our rights, like we have seen in this place with the silencing of elected voices on vital issues such as reproductive freedoms. Today we remember the fallen and honour those who have fought for democracy.