

Question on Notice
No. 1088
Asked on 9 June 2006

MR WALLACE asked the Minister for Small Business, Information Technology Policy and Multicultural Affairs (MR CUMMINS) —

QUESTION:

Since the Beattie Government came to power, how has it contributed to multiculturalism in Queensland?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for his Question and would like to congratulate him on his ongoing strong support for multiculturalism within his electorate.

Since 1998 the Beattie Government has initiated many programs to build positive community relations between all cultures in Queensland. In its first year in office the Government developed the Multicultural Queensland Policy which guided the State's direction on multicultural affairs. The policy was updated in 2004 with Multicultural Queensland – making a world of difference under which each Government agency has developed a Multicultural Action Plan specifying how it will implement the policy.

The Government developed the Local Area Multicultural Partnership (LAMP) program to support multiculturalism at the local level. There are now 16 LAMP workers across Queensland, including a coordinator with the Local Government Association of Queensland.

Similarly, the Government established the Multicultural Community Worker program to support ethnic communities to link to services through 20 funded workers across the State.

The highly successful Queensland Multicultural Festival has been run for the past two years and will be held on 15 October this year. The festival is a showcase of Queensland's cultural diversity and a chance for all Queenslanders to celebrate that diversity. Diversity Rocks was held in conjunction with the Festival for the first time last year. This was a program for school children and provides a marvellous opportunity to learn about different cultures. It will be held this year on 16 October.

The Premier's Multicultural Photographic Awards recognise and acknowledge the importance of diversity to the Smart State through the visual medium and are an opportunity for professional and amateurs alike to demonstrate what multiculturalism means to them. 2007 will be the third year of these awards.

In 2000, bi-partisan support was given to the recognition of the Australian South Sea Islander community as a distinct cultural group. An Action Plan was then developed to address community needs and the Australian South Sea Islander Community Foundation was established to assist community members with tertiary scholarships.

In 2001 the Beattie Government introduced amendments to strengthen the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991, prohibiting racial and religious vilification.

In October 2005 the Premier announced the Muslim Community Engagement Strategy to encourage interaction, understanding and harmony between Muslim Queenslanders and the broader community.

In the years since the Beattie Government came to power the overall grant funding for programs, projects, events and activities has increased from \$353,000 in 1997/98 to \$3.4 million in 2005/06.

The annual Multicultural Awards are a prestigious event recognising the achievements of people working in the multicultural sector often as volunteers. Since 2005 the Multicultural Awards have included a Multicultural Champion to promote multiculturalism. This year's very popular Multicultural Champion was the author, Nick Earls.

Cultural diversity benefits Queensland in the areas of international trade, business, industry and education sectors, as well as making Queensland a vibrant and dynamic society. The Beattie Government is a strong supporter of multiculturalism and the contributions it makes to the Smart State.