

Question on Notice

No. 578

Asked on 6 August 2014

MRS SMITH asked the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier (MR ELMES)—

QUESTION

Will the Minister advise how the Queensland Government's Valuing Diversity Grants Program will help recognise and value Queensland's rich cultural diversity in my electorate of Mount Ommaney?

ANSWER

I thank the Member for Mount Ommaney for her question.

Queensland is indeed rich in cultural diversity and I am proud that through my portfolio I am able to contribute to and support many community activities.

As is rightly acknowledged in the question, the Valuing Diversity Grants Program (the Grants Program) assists Queensland to recognise and value its rich cultural diversity. Under the Grants Program, multicultural communities and organisations can apply for funding for events that promote community cohesion and understanding of this diversity.

On 17 July 2014, I announced the opening of the 2014–15 funding round for the Grants Program, for events to be held throughout 2015. The round closed on 22 August 2014 and applications are currently being considered. I will make an announcement about the successful applications later in the year.

The Member's Electorate of Mount Ommaney is one such community that is culturally diverse with a substantial amount of its population having identified as having Chinese, Irish or Indian ancestries in the 2011 Census conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. How the Grants Program will help Mount Ommaney recognise and value this rich diversity can be evidenced through the outcomes to date of the 2013–14 funding round.

In 2013–14, I approved funding for 88 diverse cultural events to the value of \$547,500 across Queensland to be held throughout this calendar year. A list of events funded in 2013–14 can be found at: www.datsima.qld.gov.au/datsima/grants-and-funding/valuing-diversity-grants-program. This funding was provided to support large and small festivals across Queensland, attracting people from far and wide, not just from within their local community.

A number of funded events have already been held this year in close vicinity to the Member's Electorate this year, for example, the Chinese New Year celebrations in January and February (Brisbane City and Sunnybank), the St Patrick's Day Parade in March (Brisbane City), the Global Fiesta in May (Ipswich), and the India Day Fair in August (Brisbane Roma Street Parkland).

There are also many other events with funding through the Grants Program that are to be held before the end of the year, such as the Moon Cake Festival in September (Brisbane City), the Indian Festival of Lights in October (Brisbane King George Square), and the Chanukah in the City event in December (Brisbane Square).

The 2014 Queensland Cultural Diversity Week, which is held from 30 August to 7 September, is the State's largest celebration of cultural diversity. This year's encompassing theme is 'Everyone's invited'.

The 2014 Queensland Cultural Diversity Week includes over 50 events and activities across Queensland including the Brisbane Serbian Festival on 31 August in Dutton Park, and the Pacifica Spring Festival on 6 September in Goodna.

A highlight of the week has been the Premier's Cultural Diversity Awards gala dinner, held on Saturday 30 August 2014. Fourteen Queensland individuals and organisations from the business and community sectors whom made an outstanding contribution to supporting and promoting cultural diversity were honoured at the event.

I have encouraged attendance at such events and to witness first-hand the benefits for the community.

Residents of Mount Ommaney may also have attended and benefited from the Queensland Migrant Small Business Expo in Eight Mile Plains on 4 September. Under the 2014 funding round for a new Economic Participation Grants Program, I approved funding to support this initiative to deliver economic independence and participation opportunities, as well as support business development for Queenslanders from culturally diverse backgrounds.

I have also approved funding of just under \$50,000 to the Brisbane City Council to deliver culturally inclusive and responsive services across council's regions including Mount Ommaney. In addition, I approved funding of more than \$290,000 to the Multicultural Development Association to undertake initiatives across Brisbane and surrounding regions, including Mount Ommaney, that strengthen the capacity of people from culturally diverse backgrounds to access services.

In light of the 2014 outcomes thus far, I expect that the 2014–15 funding round for the Valuing Diversity Grants Program will promote an exciting range of festivals and events to be held throughout Queensland which showcase and celebrate cultural diversity. It is important to enable Queensland communities to join together to acknowledge and respect our cultures and our diversity. The Grants Program helps to deliver this for Queenslanders.