

Question on Notice

No. 375

Asked on 22 March 2018

MR S ANDREW asked the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (Hon S Hinchliffe) –

QUESTION:

With reference to the appeals made by South Sea Islanders for a formal apology for the Queensland Parliament's passing of the Polynesian Labourer's Act of 1868 and the kidnapping and enslavement of nearly 66,000 people—

Will the Minister advise (a) why these appeals have been continually dismissed, as recently as March last year and (b) does the Minister have any plans to rectify this, or does he consider that issuing a 'recognition of the South Sea Islanders' contributions to Queensland' is sufficient recompense?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Mirani for the question.

Within the broader Australian South Sea Islander (ASSI) community there are divided views on the need for a formal apology.

The 2014 *Queensland Australian South Sea Islander Community Survey* of the views and priorities of Queensland's ASSI community, saw 447 surveys completed over a three-month period. The matter of an apology was not raised as a priority by respondents. However, recognition, strong community associations and community unity were all highlighted as being important goals.

I understand the Member attended the 21 September 2017 Mackay community meeting, that was hosted by the former Minister for Multicultural Affairs to listen to the needs and aspirations of Queensland's ASSI community.

To the best of my knowledge the matter regarding an apology was not raised by the Member or other community members at that meeting. The Member can be assured that the Palaszczuk Government continues to acknowledge ASSI history in a range of ways, including a strong focus on working with the community to ensure their voices are heard and acted on, and that current and future generations have equal opportunities to participate in and contribute to the economic, social, political and cultural life of the State.

Our Government is supporting ASSI Queenslanders with community-led initiatives such as the establishment of an interim working group to undertake initial work towards the establishment of a State representative body.