



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

ADJOURNMENT

Tangney Electorate: Multiculturalism

SPEECH

Wednesday, 29 March 2023

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Speaker	Lim, Sam MP	Question No.	

Mr LIM (Tangney) (19:35): Australia is a multicultural society. The contributions made by our multicultural communities shape our country for the better. It is the addition of colour, flavour, depth and dimension, in the form of culturally and linguistically diverse experiences, that enriches our way of life. But often—too often—the perception of our multicultural community is skewed by subliminal messaging or full-blown agitational remarks by our media. We must call this out.

I refer to an article from ABC news earlier this month, with the headline: 'India: Narendra Modi calls on Albanese to combat Sikh attacks on Hindu temples in Australia'. This article was not only misleading but also so harmful to both the Sikh and Hindu communities in Australia.

I have large communities of Sikhs and Hindus in my electorate of Tangney. Canning Vale is the home of the first Sikh gurdwara in Western Australia. Canning Vale is also the home of the Perth Hindu Temple. Whilst there are differences, both communities work tirelessly to advocate for their people, and both communities are benefiting from the election commitment made by our government to their place of worship.

The recent incidents of violence highlighted in the article do not represent the Australian Sikh community. We must condemn any form of violence, but we must also ensure that we do not target an entire community. It is important to understand that the Sikhs follow the teachings of their gurus, which emphasise love, compassion and service to humanity. The recent incidents of violence do not reflect the values and the teachings encompassed by the Sikh faith.

Around the same time as this article from the ABC, the *Daily Mail* published a story online implying that three Chinese men taking photographs at the Avalon air show in Melbourne were spies! This was absolutely outrageous! I'm sure many of you have heard of my own personal experience, when I was doing campaigning and doorknocking in the Tangney electorate, where I, too, was being told, 'Go back to China'—even though I was, in fact, born in Malaysia. We have all heard: 'Do not judge a book by its cover.' So why should the colour of my skin, the way I talk and the way I express myself be used against me as a weapon? The racial profiling in this article not only affected the victims but also caused profound discomfort and anxiety to many in the Chinese community and those of Asian heritage. It is unfair, unreasonable and unacceptable to suspect anyone with a camera at a public event—let alone anyone who looks Asian or to be of Chinese descent—of being a spy. The article has since been swiftly removed, after the *Daily Mail* received complaints and an open letter calling them out for their baseless accusations.

As leaders, it is our responsibility to ensure that we do not propagate false narratives that can harm our communities and divide us. I say this because more than 160 nationalities live in my electorate of Tangney. It reflects modern Australia, where we represent a unique and diverse set of cultures. We must work towards building bridges between our multicultural communities to promote peace and harmony. Hindsight is a great thing. I say this to all media watching or listening: let us acknowledge and appreciate the significant contribution of our multicultural communities in Australia. Let us all work together to promote peace and harmony between all communities, because our words are powerful. They should be used for unity, not division. (*Time expired*)