




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR NOOSA

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Parliament, Harmony

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (2.35 pm): There are so many conversations we need to have, yet there seems to be much reluctance to have them. Is it because it makes us confront and consider perspectives and perceptions other than our own? Within my own electorate, I continue to encourage discussions that may be at times contentious and burdened by bias. However, they can invigorate, resolve and identify common ground to provide solutions. Sadly, many of our Queenslanders do not engage and put forward their views for fear of reprisals, of being labelled, of being prejudiced against or of being discounted, especially on social media.

The topics I bring into the chamber from my electorate are not borne from judgement or criticism. They are to encourage a culture and space for inquiring minds, including our next generation who seek, as we all do, a future free from fear or from the difficulties encountered from an underpinning framework of systems developed some 200 years ago that could not foresee the present day.

One conversation that we need to have, as uncomfortable as it may appear, is that of our morning rituals here in this chamber. This should not be taken as a negative, in anger or as one to fear. Through bills passed, speeches on debates, the development of policy and statements to media, we clearly articulate that we are a multicultural, inclusive and compassionate Queensland. As parliamentarians, should we then not lead by example and discuss how to be more inclusive at the start of each sitting day?

Expanding rituals that accommodate and reflect our community's diversity in beliefs and spirituality does not detract from current practices. Rather, it enriches and breaks down the barriers and fears that promote uncertainty, angst and, sadly, at times, acts of violence. As a parliament, what would a modernised version of our morning rituals look like—one that encompasses but does not detract, one that accommodates our diversity, one that honours and acknowledges our traditional custodians as well as those who have given so much, at times their lives, to create the freedoms we enjoy today?

There are so many aspects to consider in this conversation. All that I ask is that it be had—with respect and foresight to promote healing and encourage further discussions on celebrating being united as Queenslanders and as Australians. The Harmony Day celebration here at the 'big house' was a wonderful event, and in my own electorate it was movingly beautiful, with Tewantin State School's featured song 'I am, you are, we are Australian' also sung in Gubbi Gubbi, or Kabi Kabi. This did not negate or detract through translation; it broadened and expanded to everyone's delight. Many cultures were represented and united with genuine warmth and vibrancy, and this is both our current reality and our future.

We are all proud to be Queenslanders and Australians. We want to celebrate that together every day, without recriminations, without divisions. In all of our heritages and faiths, we have moments in history not to be proud of. However, we need to be able to celebrate who we are now and what we are

aspiring to. We must learn from but not judge on the past, nor succumb to fears driven by the behaviours or atrocities of a minority of individuals and groups that clearly do not represent what we right here and the majority subscribe to.

We are one mob and we all belong. As MPs let us lead the way by saying it is okay and acceptable to have differing beliefs, perspectives and opinions that respect and abide by the social contract we have with each other to live peacefully and safely, respecting our Queensland and Australian laws, legislation and regulations. Looking at our own rituals each morning is a progressive, positive step forward in this.

To finish, we all know these lyrics so well. In any translation, they say it all—

We are one, but we are many

...

We'll share a dream and sing with one voice

I am, you are, we are Australian