

WORLD WAR II INTERNMENT CAMPS

Notice of Motion

Mr P. Papalia gave notice that at the next sitting of the house he would move —

That this house —

- (1) notes the presence of internment camps in the state of Western Australia during World War II for the purpose of detaining “enemy aliens” and prisoners of war, and that some “enemy aliens” were transported from Western Australia to internment camps in other states of the commonwealth of Australia;
- (2) acknowledges that amongst the “enemy aliens” interned were people who were either permanent Australian residents, born in Australia, or had become British subjects in accordance with commonwealth of Australia immigration and citizenship laws of the day;
- (3) accepts that the overwhelming majority of the people interned at the camps were law-abiding, had made a valuable contribution to Australian society, and posed no threat to the security of the nation or its people;
- (4) believes that most people were primarily interned in the camps on the basis of their cultural heritage or the mistaken belief that it posed an unreasonable risk, and not for any demonstrated or validated criminal or security concerns;
- (5) is aware of research and personal histories that demonstrate that the internment experience had a long-term detrimental impact on the health and welfare of many of the people interned;
- (6) recognises the pain, suffering, grief and hardship experienced by the people who were interned and their families, and in particular the impact on mothers and wives who were left to care for children, homes, farms or businesses without government assistance;
- (7) congratulates those internees and their families who made the decision to remain in Australia and rebuild their lives following their internment;
- (8) celebrates the lives of those former internees and their families who, despite their internment experiences, went on to make a significant contribution to the economic, social and cultural development of Australia;
- (9) asserts that while the internment policy was implemented in the circumstances of a national emergency, it nevertheless acknowledges that the injustice experienced by some Australians was unnecessary and avoidable; and
- (10) hopes that as a maturing nation we have learnt from the World War II internment experience to ensure that future generations of migrants to this country are treated with justice and equality before the law, and are not discriminated against on the sole basis of their cultural heritage.