

SENATOR DAVID JOHNSTON — COMMENTS REGARDING ETHNIC PROFILING

120. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests:

I refer the minister to comments made over the weekend by his federal colleague Liberal senator David Johnston in support of ethnic profiling, and his view, as quoted, that “educated bigotry” is useful.

- (1) Does the minister agree with Senator Johnston that in an era of terrorism it is “common sense” for law enforcers to target people of non-European appearance and with non-European names at Australian airports?
- (2) What is the Western Australian Liberal Party’s policy on ethnic profiling?
- (3) What feedback has the minister received from members of Western Australian ethnic communities in response to these comments; and, will he be making any representations to Senator Johnston on behalf of those communities?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI replied:

I thank the member for his question.

- (1)-(3) I have been very proactive and involved with the ethnic communities since I became the Western Australian Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests. One of the issues I want to champion is that all Western Australians, irrespective of their ethnicity, race, colour, creed or religion, have equal opportunity and equal access to all services within Western Australia. I am very conscious of the fact that people from different backgrounds should not be labelled in the same way as some extremist people are; for instance, the bombings in Mumbai were carried out by a specific Muslim group from Pakistan, and not every Muslim is like that. I want to go forward very carefully to support and encourage all people.

Mr P. Papalia: What is your party’s policy on ethnic profiling?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I have not asked for any ethnic profiling, nor do I intend to do so. I am setting up an advisory group, which I want to access all sections of the ethnic community. Not only that, my department is working on a strategic plan. I have asked the department to do that in consultation with all ethnic groups because I want full feedback from all ethnic groups about the service delivery that I can provide to all ethnic groups, to make sure that what the department is delivering is what the ethnic groups actually need and want.

The SPEAKER: A supplementary question?