



Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations
Minister for Racing
Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Our reference: COM 01057-2017

17 MAR 2017

Mr Neil Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
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Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to petitions 2703-17 and 2652-16 tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 15 February 2017, regarding a formal apology to Australian South Sea Islanders.

In September 2000, the Queensland Government, with bi-partisan support, recognised Australian South Sea Islander peoples as a distinct cultural group, through the *Queensland Government Recognition Statement — Australian South Sea Islander Community*.

The Queensland Government remains committed to the recognition of Australian South Sea Islanders as a distinct ethnic and cultural group; to giving Australian South Sea Islander history, culture and contribution due recognition; and to ensuring present and future generations of Australian South Sea Islanders have equality of opportunities to participate in and contribute to the economic, social, political and cultural life of the state.

The *Multicultural Recognition Act 2016* establishes the Multicultural Queensland Charter, which recognises the contribution of diverse cultural groups, including Australian South Sea Islanders.

I recently released the new *Queensland Multicultural Policy – Our story, our future* which includes a statement recognising Australian South Sea Islanders, their unique history, and the contributions they have made to the social, cultural and economic development of Queensland.

Under this government, we have invested more than \$73,000 in 2016–17 to support Australian South Sea Islander communities through the Community Action for a Multicultural Society program, with an additional \$4000 under the Celebrating Multicultural Queensland grants program towards a recognition function commemorating 150 years of Australian South Sea Islanders in Mackay in 2017.

The Queensland Government is currently considering a range of options to further address Australian South Sea Islander disadvantage and to promote recognition of their culture, heritage and contribution to our state. It is anticipated that additional community consultation will soon be underway. A key function of my Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council is to continue to actively engage with communities on issues and opportunities as we work together to bring the *Multicultural Recognition Act 2016*, and its components to life in real and tangible ways for Queensland.

I would be pleased if you would arrange for the tabling of this letter in response to the petitions in accordance with Standing Order 31 by 17 March 2017.

If you require further information, please contact Ms Sharon Durham, Chief of Staff of my office on 3719 7140.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grace', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

HON. GRACE GRACE MP
Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations
Minister for Racing
Minister for Multicultural Affairs