

RACHEL NOLAN MP, MEMBER FOR IPSWICH PRESS RELEASE

NOLAN CALLS FOR STATEMENT OF NATIONAL VALUES

Member for Ipswich Rachel Nolan today called on the Australian Government to adopt a Statement of Australian Values to clearly state who we are and what we believe in.

“Every year at Australia Day we get wrapped up in a debate about Australian identity,” Ms Nolan said.

“That’s healthy inasmuch as a country that’s not evolving is a country that’s dying. But underneath all the debate about different politics, cultures, races and faiths there should be a clear understanding that there are some things that are incontrovertibly Australian – and which all Australians have a duty to uphold.

“A Statement of Australian Values would have to be clearly discussed with the Australian people but in my view there are 5 core Australian values –

- Democracy
- The equality of all people – including the equality of women
- Freedom of religion and respect for the religious practice of others
- Respect for the rule of law
- Fairness and compassion

“The first four values distinguish us from non-democratic nations which do not accept the humanity and the equality of all individuals.

“The last is what makes us Australian. It means that unlike the French or Americans we do not simply celebrate “freedom and liberty” as ends in themselves. *Our* freedom is a step on the path to creating a fair, compassionate and just society.

“Cultural diversity is great but it only works if we are all committed to being Australian first.

“Rather than playing politics with issues of national identity, the Australian Government should set some common ground for all Australians. It should establish a statement of values, make it clear that all Australians are expected to uphold those values and teach them in schools.

“The absence of such a clear statement means that Australian national identity, rather than being clearly defined, is contentious and arguments about it tend to divide rather than unite the Australian people.