

EXTRACT FROM HANSARD

9 JUNE 2009

ASSAULTS AGAINST INDIAN STUDENTS

476. Dr M.D. NAHAN to the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests:

As the minister knows, a lot of Indian students and families live in my electorate of Riverton. A number of them have approached me to express concerns about the recent assaults against Indian students in Melbourne and Sydney. I understand that the minister has met with Ms Sushma Paul, the Honorary Consul for India, to discuss this matter. Can the minister outline to the house the outcomes of that meeting and any further developments relating to that matter?

Mr J.N. Hyde interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, Member for Perth!

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI replied:

I thank the member for Riverton for his interest in this matter and for his interest in other matters relating to multiculturalism in general. I initiated a meeting with the Honorary Consul for India, Ms Sushma Paul, who at short notice met with me in my office, along with two Indian students. That was on 3 June. The students informed me that they were very concerned about the safety of international students who travel late at night on public transport.

The Maylands train station in Eighth Avenue was considered of particular concern to them. I have encouraged the Honorary Consul for India and the students to report any incidents relating to safety to the police. Since that meeting, I have been advised that the police have been made aware of these concerns.

This week the Office of Multicultural Interests will be participating in a national teleconference to discuss attacks on Indian nationals and the federal minister's intent to establish a national task force. The police are best placed to deal with those who prey on students and who may consider other people to be soft targets.

Mr J.N. Hyde interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Perth has ample opportunities in this place to ask questions of people on the other side of the house. Now is not the time to do it. I formally call the member for the first time.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Importantly, I have relayed to the honorary consul and the students that Western Australia is a safe place to live and that Western Australia welcomes international students who choose to study here. My office will continue to liaise with the Honorary Consul for India to reinforce that view and to reiterate this government's strong stance against criminal acts committed against any persons who are residents of or living in this state.