

HANSARD 17 August 2011

## Federation of Indian Associations of the ACT

**MR SESELJA** (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (7.29): I recently had the opportunity and pleasure to attend the launch of FINACT, which is the Federation of Indian Associations of the ACT. I had the opportunity with some of my Assembly colleagues, including Ms Burch, Dr Bourke and my Liberal colleague Steve Doszpot.

It was a wonderful event and, I think, a very important event because the Indian community in Canberra plays a really important role. It is clearly a growing community which has played a very important role for a long time.

The point I made at the event was that I do not think we as a city or we as a nation yet value our relationship with India anywhere near as much as we should. India is a growing power. I believe it will be right up there with the United States and China as a pre-eminent world power in the decades to come. So our relationship with India is a very important one, economically and culturally. Whilst we are different cultures, we also have some wonderful things in common—a similar legal system, a love of cricket and a whole range of other things which mean that Indians have been able to very easily fit into the Australian community and contribute to the ACT community.

I congratulate Jacob Vadakkedathu on his leadership of FINACT. Bringing together around 22 organisations as a peak body for the Indian community is no mean feat. He deals with all of the politics that go on internally and obviously to do that is quite an achievement. So to Jacob: well done—and also to Her Excellency Mrs Sujatha Singh, the High Commissioner of India, who was also there. I was very impressed with the way she spoke. I was very impressed with not just her knowledge but also her good humour, how personable she was in the way she spoke and how she had the ability to speak afterwards. So well done to the Indian community; well done to FINACT; well done to all of those who contributed to that launch and to that organisation being established.