

SPEECH BY MP ANNE ALY IN PARLIAMENT IN RESPONSE TO RACIST ANNING:

“I came in here with a speech prepared. I came in here, ready to roll up my sleeves and to fight. And to defend as I have had to so many times over the last 30 years.

“And I have sat here for the last hour and I have heard the leader of the opposition, the deputy leader of the opposition, the prime minister. And the minister for home affairs, and the member for Chifley speak and the deputy prime minister speak and I am tired of fighting.

“I am tired.

“I’m tired of having to stand up against hate. Against vilification. Time and time and time again.

“And I wrote in this speech that I have, that I was proud to be a member of the Labor party that today honours the tradition of Bob Hawke in 1988 when he stood up and put a motion in this parliament confirming Australia’s non-discrimination immigration policy.

“But I am also proud to be a member of this parliament – that is united today. Thank you.

“That is united today in its condemnation of those terrible words that were spoken in the other place yesterday. But that pride is tinged with sadness.

“It is tinged with sadness that we have had to do this for 30 years. For 30 years. You know, I once attended a seminar which was put on for young migrant kids in my electorate and they all stood up and talked about some of the challenges to them in their young lives – these were kids who were 15, 16 right up to the age of 18. And I sat there listening to them and I started crying.

“I am a big sooky la-la at the best of times, let’s just put that out there – weddings, funerals, speeches in parliament – everything. And they came up to me and they said ‘Anne, we didn’t mean to make you cry’ and I said, no, you don’t understand. Your challenges today are the same challenges that I had 30 years ago.

“And I’m – I just want to know when it is going to change. When it is going to change for our future generations.

“When is it going to get better? For them? But today, this morning, I see hope.

“I see possibilities. I see opportunity. I see leaders on both sides who are willing to stand up. And I see that I don’t have to fight alone any more. Thank you for that. Thank you. It means a lot.

“It means a lot to me. It means a lot to my kids. It means a lot to my mum, who was told to stand at the back of the line every time she went to get on a bus, while she struggled with two toddlers. Told to stand at the back of the line and told to repeatedly say ‘please’ and ‘thank you’ before she was allowed on that bus.

“This today means something. It means something. It means something to Australia. It means something that all of us here stand up against this racism, stand up against this racism. Stand up against the disgraceful, disgraceful use of that terminology, that neo-Nazi, white supremacy terminology. It wasn’t an accident and I won’t accept it was an accident. That was a deliberate use of a heinous, heinous word that brings back so many painful memories and sets a precedent for the future of our country that we need to stand up and stop.

“So I just want to rise up today and say thank you. I am not going to say any of this speech that I wrote.”