

## DNA test shows Hanson's Middle Eastern heritage

• FEBRUARY 11, 2007



Test ... Ms Hanson says she is mystified and amazed / Sunday Mail

FORMER One Nation leader Pauline Hanson, the outspoken proponent of polarising immigration policies, has discovered she is of Middle Eastern heritage.

Ms Hanson said she was "amazed" and "mystified" to learn of her ancestry. A recent DNA swab, taken with Ms Hanson's permission by The Sunday Mail, has revealed the controversial former MP's genetic makeup is drawn from a rich multicultural background, with 9 per cent originating in the Middle East, 32 per cent from Italy, Greece or Turkey and 59 per cent from northern Europe.

When told of the results, the former fish and chip shop owner appeared flustered, making references to "rape and pillage" in ancient times, adding: "All I can think of is that probably down the track it eventuated from some war.

"But I'm not going to knock it. It has made me who I am."

Ms Hanson is not the only prominent Queenslander with a mixed racial background, with the same international testing process revealing that Premier Peter Beattie has even greater links to the Middle East.

The Premier's sample showed that his DNA is 70 per cent northern European, 16 per cent Middle Eastern and 14 per cent south Asian.

Middle Eastern is defined for the test as modern-day Saudi Arabia, Iraq, parts of Iran, Syria and Jordan and the Arab countries of North Africa.

Greece and Turkey are defined as southeastern European while northern European is defined by countries such as England, Ireland and Scotland.

The tests use 176 genetic markers to trace racial ancestry back thousands of years and were carried out by Florida-based company DNAPrint Genomics.

When taking the test at her rural property outside Ipswich before Christmas, Ms Hanson, who recently attacked Muslims for "eradicating Australian traditions", said she was confident her ancestry came from England and Ireland.

In December the right-wing firebrand, who once warned that Australia was in danger of being swamped by Asians, launched a fresh attack on black South Africans and Muslims.

But she vowed yesterday that knowledge of her own exotic ancestry will not colour her views.

"I can't even believe you would even ask me that just because I might have 9 per cent Middle Eastern in me – this girl here is 100 per cent Australian," she said.

DNAPrint Genomics scientist Dr Matt Thomas said it was not unusual for someone who thinks they are "pure bred" European to have an Arab ancestor.

"People have moved around a lot more than is commonly thought. When people think about their relatives they think back to their grandparents or great-grand-parents but we go further back in time than that," he said.

"What this test routinely shows is that people have a lot more in common with people than they thought they did."

The test on Mr Beattie showed he has a more complicated ancestry than the Scottish heritage he often refers to.

"The test is certainly saying that he shares some genetic information in common with the south Asian group," said Dr Thomas.

"It may be a reflection of genetic markers brought over to Scotland from Scandinavia because we see often some Asian markers with that population group."

Mr Beattie said the results were a win for multiculturalism.

"This shows that multi-culturalism is a fact of life. The world is a melting pot. We're all one human race and we should treat each other like that."

Broncos Test forward Sam Thaiday also agreed to be tested.

The Torres Strait Islander was found to be 53 per cent European and 47 per cent east Asian.

Dr Thomas said the company had experienced a wide range of reactions since launching the \$500 test last year.

"This is proven science. We have papers submitted to peer review journals and the technology we developed is used in the American courts system," he said.

Last year, genetic tests conducted on the daughter of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher showed 24 per cent of her DNA was Middle Eastern.