



# TORRES STRAIT ISLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL

Lot 12 Francis Road Hammond Island QLD 4875  
Phone: (07) 4034 5775 Email: [corporate.affairs@tsirc.qld.gov.au](mailto:corporate.affairs@tsirc.qld.gov.au)

PO Box 7336 Cairns QLD 4870  
ABN 15 292 645 165

Our Ref: CAE:MM-MOKK

Issued by email:  
[health@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:health@parliament.qld.gov.au)

The Health, Communities, Disability Services and  
Family Violence Prevention Committee  
Parliament House  
Cnr George & Alice Streets  
Brisbane, QLD 4000

07/08/2020

## Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa (Torres Strait Islander Child Rearing Practice) Bill 2020

Dear Committee Chair, and Members,

The Torres Strait Island Council (TSIRC), which is represented at today's hearing by Cr. Gentano Lui Jnr. (Deputy Mayor & Councillor for Iama), Cr. Aven S. Noah (Councillor for Mer), and Cr. Conwell Tabau (Councillor for Saibai), and myself in my position as Mayor, is pleased to offer our unequivocal support for the *Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa Bill 2020*.

Today's Public hearing on Saibai is a significant event in **'Strengthening our Island Identity'**;

**'Kunakanpalan ngoelmun lagaw mina pawal'**  
*Kulalgaw Ya dialect of the Kala Lagaw Ya Language Group*  
**'Azimuarteda Merbi Ged Oroai Ge'**  
*Meriam Mer Language Group*

This bill carries a specific and important significance as a new nexus between LORE and LAW. This shows a continual progression from the Mabo Decision to the bill before us today. The *Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa Bill* will assist in the strengthening of a traditional practise and Ailan Kastom that has existed since time immemorial.

This is not about being recognised in our communities, that recognition already existed, this is more so for our children to reaffirm their identity and place in a Western Society.

As Torres Strait Islanders, we are all inter-connected and residents of our communities are all inter-related. Because of our inter-connectedness, adoption for Torres Strait Islanders takes on a different context to that in the Western World. So too does extended family and kinship.

Our Ailan Kastom ensured that every life mattered, and there was a place for every child. This Ailan Kastom was a secret practise, firmly grounded in the principles of respect and trust, however as Western World concepts evolved into our world, this secret practise at times was, with much trauma for the individuals involved brought into the open.

The independent Commissioner model set forth in this bill, and that person being a suitably qualified Torres Strait Islander, aligns to our Ailan Kastom, and the principles of privacy and respect. This process will enable us to determine, truly in the spirit of self-determination, our place in a western society.

We formally acknowledge the Member for Cook and the Palaszczuk Government for their leadership and recognition of Ailan Kastom to bring this bill to reality. We also formally acknowledge;

- The Hon Alastair Nicholson AO RFD QC, for his enduring advocacy to ensure formal recognition of this Ailan Pasin, working alongside the other Eminent Persons appointed by the Queensland Government being Ivy Trevallion and Charles Passi.
- The Working Party Members, being the late Steve Mam, Bill Lowah, McRose Elu, Francis Tapim, Dana Ober, Paul Ban and all Community Members throughout the length and breadth of Zenadth Kes for their involvement in the consultation process.
- And our former Island Coordinating Councils, who acted under the Community Services (Torres Strait) Act 1984, for their previous advocacy and leadership.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Phillemon Mosby', written in a cursive style.

Cr. Phillemon Mosby  
**Mayor**