



Speech by

**DESLEY SCOTT**

**MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE**

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**ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE BILL; TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CULTURAL HERITAGE BILL**

**Mrs DESLEY SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (9.47 p.m.): I am glad to see this legislation before the House, which will offer additional protection to the significant cultural sites that are so much a part of our Aboriginal people's heritage, but, far more than that, so much a part of their identity as a people. This legislation, following extensive consultation, replaces the former Cultural Record (Landscapes Queensland and Queensland Estate) Act, which has resulted in long delays, excessive financial outlays and was basically quite ineffective in protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage.

My relationship with a large number of indigenous people in my electorate has enriched my experience and understanding of their culture. The Logan city area does not have a group of Aboriginal people who can trace their ancestry back to the area but, rather, it was a meeting place where people came together and so it is today. We have many Aboriginal clans from areas such as Cape York and Atherton Tableland as well as a large group of Torres Strait Islanders, Stradbroke Islander people and groups from the southern states and the western areas of Queensland. It is a very rich cultural mix.

Quite a number of indigenous organisations operate in the area and make a significant difference to the people of the area. Burragah has operated a preschool for many years and has been of great assistance to people in need. Martin and Noeleen Watego of Burragah are people with big hearts and who have made a great contribution to our community and to youth programs in the area. Each year our Gammin Association, under the direction of Celia Moore, runs a weekend-long basketball tournament attracting people from a wide area. For a number of years Gammin has also held a breakfast on International Women's Day, inviting women from many other organisations. It is a truly great morning of women joining together to support one another. Our Murri network has also played a role in the area, and Burringilly runs accommodation for elderly indigenous people and also has a very close affiliation with Woodridge High. Geraldine at Murrigunyah and her team offer counselling for women experiencing violence in the home.

These are just some of the projects my Aboriginal people are involved in. Of great significance is the work many of our elders and cultural workers perform in our schools. This year the students in Logan were saddened to lose one of their very loved cultural workers, Linda Link—Aunty Linda to so many. She will live on in our hearts. Sue Milne at Mabel Park High School is always a friendly face and has a real love for her students. Similarly, Rina at Kingston College and workers such as Faith Green and her family at Woodridge High School really inspire our students. Peggy Tideman of the education office, who is also an ATSiC commissioner, gives wonderful support to our school workers, as well as other projects in the area. The Department of Families, Youth Justice and such organisations as our Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre, now Multilink, all have quality workers who work well with our indigenous people, particularly our youth—such workers as Ian Twist from Youth Justice and Barry from Multilink. Albert and Nancy Bowie have also made a real difference in the lives of many of our young people.

A healthy Aboriginal community is one with respected elders and leaders who have the wellbeing of their community at heart. Recently some significant gains have been made to form an elders group which will hopefully result in our indigenous communities forming a closer network to work on projects in a collaborative way. Over the years I have established a close relationship with many of our elders. Uncle Reg Knox has been a very important figure in our schools—a gentle man, a great artist and a wise elder who so willingly gives of his time to mentor our young people and pass on his

artistic and cultural knowledge. Reg and Beverley Knox are joined in their commitment to young people by their daughter, Missy, who just two weeks ago gave birth to a baby girl, Georgia. What a happy occasion!

My words here would not be complete without true recognition of the work Paddy Jerome has done for his people. Paddy has a long history of establishing organisations, such as the Aboriginal Legal Service in Sydney. Paddy has been responsible for academic papers on the effects of alcohol on communities and has a great understanding of the underlying issues confronting his people. He has had a long ministry as chaplain in our prisons and has a longing to reach out to young people, to help them understand their culture and really be proud of their heritage. Paddy is in the process of establishing a significant cultural heritage centre outside Toowoomba, near Highfields, with support from the Arts Minister, the Hon. Matt Foley, Cobb & Co. Museum, the Toowoomba City Council and the Queensland Museum. With the passion he shows for his people, he is a truly great leader.

This legislation will establish a cultural heritage database that is not dependent on native title and that will recognise areas of significance. A management plan will be required where an environmental impact statement is necessary, ensuring balance. A duty of care is established to preserve and protect this cultural heritage. In the words of my friend Paddy Jerome, Aboriginal people do not own the land; the land owns them. They are custodians of the land. Their wellbeing is tied to the land. It is important that we as a community recognise the sacred and the spirituality of Aboriginal people. They can teach us so much. I thank the minister and his staff for this legislation, which is a work in progress, with a review planned in five years. I commend the bills to the House.