



Speech by

Hon. LIDDY CLARK

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

Hansard 29 April 2004

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Community Justice Forums

Hon. E. A. CLARK (Clayfield—ALP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy) (10.12 a.m.): Last night I attended the south Queensland region justice group forum in Toowoomba in the electorate of that very fine member Kerry Shine.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! This is my final warning to the member for Gregory.

Ms LIDDY CLARK: Do you mind? Get over it.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! This is also my final warning to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Ms LIDDY CLARK: Last night I attended the south Queensland region justice group forum in Toowoomba in the electorate of Mr Kerry Shine to talk about the work of the community justice groups in this region. Not only was I impressed with the great work of these dedicated members; I was heartened, humbled and energised. Like all community justice groups, south Queensland's groups include respected representatives from each community—elders and young people—who are working with the Beattie government to come up with the best justice solutions for their area.

In Toowoomba alone the community justice group has developed a network of government and community agencies to work on four different projects. One of these is a foot patrol to target kids at risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system. In Cunnamulla, the community justice group has been working on establishing relationships with community, government agencies and the judiciary. The Balonne justice group at St George is working with the court and the police consultative committee to provide a point of contact for people in Goondiwindi and Dirranbandi. In Logan, the justice group is working through the District Court helping to provide advice on appropriate sentencing options and working with other groups to run youth camps and help youth at risk. Of course, Murri Watch here in Brisbane, their dedication to their work and to their people and the way they work is a model for new groups to aspire to.

I have enormous respect for the work each of these community justice groups is doing to help keep Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth out of the criminal justice system and safeguard the future of our indigenous communities. Justice Tony Fitzgerald recognised community justice groups as the way forward in his 2001 Cape York Justice Study. There are currently 34 community justice groups funded through the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy's local justice initiatives program in both urban and remote communities and a total of 44 justice groups throughout the state.

One of the comments last evening from a representative from Cunnamulla was that it was terrific to be part of a workshop that is facilitated by indigenous people for indigenous people. So, to Wayne Dodson and Ros Kneebone from DATSIP and their staff, my congratulations. My visit to the south Queensland region justice group forum followed a visit to the west Queensland region justice group forum in Mount Isa earlier this month. To say I enjoyed both these visits would be an understatement. They gave me an opportunity to listen and have a yarn with the

people in both south and west Queensland who are helping to make a difference to their communities. I applaud their dedication to the betterment of their people.