



Speech by

Hon. Liddy Clark

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

Hansard Thursday, 17 June 2004

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Reconciliation Week; NAIDOC Week

Hon. E.A. CLARK (Clayfield—ALP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy) (10.21 a.m.): As the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, I knew I would face two main tasks—to listen, and to celebrate. I have already heard stories that have saddened and have humbled me.

Mr Johnson: You've celebrated all right, darling.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Ms LIDDY CLARK: Unbelievable. As long as the member thinks he is funny. I have been called on to listen to stories that have few words but say almost too much to bear. I heard many of these stories as Australia commemorated Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week last month. These events were not ceremonies of empty words. They were ceremonies to acknowledge the dignity and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This was the first time as minister I had taken part in these ceremonies. I feel deeply honoured to have this opportunity to listen, and I also feel deeply honoured to carry this knowledge and the power of these occasions to the decision-making table. These events are not just about the past. The past plays, and will continue to play, an intrinsic part in the future of Queensland. We must never forget the injustices of past years. But at the same time, we are moving forward to a united tomorrow.

The timing of Sorry Day, Reconciliation Week, Mabo Day and NAIDOC Week is a true reflection of where we are going. We move from recognition of the past to the work of the present and a building towards the future. NAIDOC Week—National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee Week—is a way of recognising and celebrating the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and traditions and the place these Queenslanders hold in our state both today and tomorrow.

I urge all Queenslanders to get involved in NAIDOC Week from 4-11 July to show their support for reconciliation and celebrate the way forward. Events will be held around the state with the Department for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy allocating up to \$60,000 to encourage community participation in NAIDOC Week. It is a time for all Queenslanders to get involved.