



Speech by  
**Curtis Pitt**

**MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE**

Hansard Thursday, 2 September 2010

---

## **REVEREND JAMES NOBLE SPORTS COMPLEX**

**Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (9.58 pm): Last week I was pleased to join with the Yarrabah community and the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister Desley Boyle, to unveil a new sign recognising one of Queensland's Indigenous heroes—Reverend James Noble. Reverend Noble was Australia's first Indigenous Anglican clergyman and played a very important role in Reverend Ernest Gribble's efforts to establish the Yarrabah mission—often standing up for other community members who were unable to stand up for themselves.

Reverend Noble was born on the Statton River near Kowanyama, studied at Scone in New South Wales and worked as a stockman in his distinguished and varied career. He moved to Far North Queensland at the end of the 19th century. He was a licensed lay reader in St John's parish in Cairns, and with his wife, Angelina, he performed religious duties, performed missionary work and helped Indigenous people resettle at Yarrabah, as many families were forcibly relocated to the mission. He spoke more than 15 dialects which helped him with his negotiation work between local Indigenous people and other parties, and he was often used as a tracker and interpreter.

The Bligh government has provided \$3,000 towards a new sign for the complex—fulfilling a promise made at the Yarrabah community cabinet in July 2007 to replace the original sign, which was blown away in a cyclone. Local residents quite rightly would not let us forget this commitment. I thank the minister for hearing my representations over many months and for ensuring that this project was followed through.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council for their assistance with this project. The Reverend James Noble Sports Complex—established in the 1990s as a drop-in community centre—is now home to one of the leading PCYCs in Queensland. Activities include after-school and vacation care, a gym, fitness classes, local events like 'dive in movie nights', as well as hosting local celebrations such as Youth Week.

The PCYC recently received \$27,272 through the Gambling Community Benefit Fund for the purchase of sports equipment and resources to continue this great work. However, the PCYC is but the service that is currently provided at this facility. Because services may come and go, it is important that the centre should herein be referred to by its proper title—the Reverend James Noble Sports Complex.

On the day of the sign unveiling, many family and community members paid tribute to Reverend Noble, including former Yarrabah mayor Vincent Mundraby. The reverend's great-grandson Hilton Noble said his family was very proud of Reverend Noble's achievements. He said his 'great-grandfather was a Kokobera man and the first Aboriginal manager, supervisor and caretaker of Yarrabah'.

Reverend James Noble played an invaluable role in the history of our region. The complex that is named in his honour will, I hope, ensure that his legacy lives on and that his work will never be forgotten.