



Speech by


**Betty Kiernan**

**MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA**

Hansard Wednesday, 15 February 2012

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## MORNINGTON ISLAND

 **Mrs KIERNAN** (Mount Isa—ALP) (9.47 pm): In 2011 alone, the government has been responsible for eight grants of land under the Aboriginal Land Act, covering an area of over 890,000 hectares. Since the proclamation of the state's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land acts in 1991, over 2.5 million hectares of land throughout Queensland has been granted as absolute freehold title to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. Of special significance to me and the members of my electorate is the handover of land on 7 December 2011 on Mornington Island.

The Mornington shire lease was transferred under two separate deeds under the Aboriginal Land Act 1991. One deed, covering most of Gununa township, was granted to the Mornington Shire Council. The second deed, covering non-township land and two culturally important areas within the township, was granted to the Gulf Region Aboriginal Corporation, the registered native title body corporate.

The government is committed to assisting GRAC and Mornington Shire Council reach agreement over appropriate tenure solutions on the island. It is crucial for the future management and economic development of the Mornington Island community that, as the two primary trustees of land on Mornington Island, GRAC and the council work together to reach agreement.

DERM is continuing to work on and to discuss land availability and tenure options. Earlier this week the Minister for Finance, Natural Resources and the Arts wrote to GRAC and the council confirming that the state will continue to provide departmental support and foster the crucial ongoing relationship between these two Indigenous groups. I am pleased to advise that the government is actively engaged in supporting this important relationship between GRAC and the council.

I have worked very closely with both the council and Mornington Island community members. Certainly over the last couple of years there have been many improvements on Mornington Island with respect to education and health services as well as children's safety, which is very important to me. I am really pleased that the council and GRAC are moving to work together for the betterment of the people of the island.