



Speech by


Hon. Campbell Newman

MEMBER FOR ASHGROVE

Hansard Thursday, 17 May 2012

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Uncle George Mye

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (2.09 pm): It is with great sadness that I advise the House of the passing on 26 April 2012 of Mr George Mye, a widely respected elder statesman from the Torres Strait, aged 85 years. I would like to join all other community leaders who have paid tribute to Mr Mye, also known as Uncle George to many in his local community of Darnley Island or Erubam Le.

Everyone who knew Mr Mye would testify that, throughout his years of dedicated community leadership since the 1960s, his values of respect, integrity and loyalty have encouraged and inspired others. A lifelong friend of the late Eddie Mabo and a former chairman of Darnley Island, Mr Mye was central in the push for the Torres Strait Islands to be granted independence. Mr Mye's advocacy for autonomy eventually led to the formation of the Torres Strait Regional Authority in 1994. In 1992 he became the leading champion of the campaign started by Eddie Mabo to gain legal recognition of Indigenous ownership of traditional lands in the Torres Strait Islands. Mr Mye's death came just six weeks before the 20th anniversary of that landmark Mabo decision—which will be 3 June 2012—and it will be a major milestone in recognising native title in Australia.

Mr Mye's MBE and Order of Australia are testament to the high regard in which he was held nationally and internationally for his commitment and dedicated leadership for Torres Strait Islander peoples. A member of the Erubam Le Traditional Land and Sea Owners Corporation, Mr Mye's notable achievements also included addressing the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations in New York in 1987 and in Geneva in 1995. Mr Mye will be missed by many people. On behalf of the government and all Queenslanders, I take this opportunity to extend my sympathy and that of this House to his wife Jennifer, his son John and his wife Riti and their five sons, his sister Florence, his extended family and the Torres Strait Islander community for their loss.