



Speech by


**Desley Scott**

**MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE**

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## STOLEN GENERATIONS EDUCATION

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (3.31 pm): The history of our early white settlement in Australia and the treatment of our Indigenous inhabitants, who peacefully cared for this land over many thousands of years, has been sanitised, ignored, misrepresented and hidden for decades. As a young girl I lived in a totally white community, knowing little of the plight of the Aboriginal community, except for several depictions in textbooks, usually of a number of young men dancing around a fire and perhaps an elder sitting cross-legged on the ground.

However, over the years it has been my absolute privilege to listen to their dreaming and yarning, to laugh over some of their exploits and cry with them as they relate the stories of children being ripped from their mother's arms, constituting what we know now as the stolen generation. Many in my community have either been part of that generation or are the children of stolen generation parents. It is amazing to think that we had Aboriginal men fighting overseas in world wars who, on their return, saw white Australians gifted land but there was no recognition for them. It was as if they had never served—and, of course, they were not citizens in their own country until the referendum of 1967, which granted them citizenship and thus the right to vote.

The history of Aboriginal people in Queensland is shameful. On Friday evening last week, I joined many from the Aboriginal corporation Link-Up Queensland at the Murri School at Acacia Ridge. The occasion was the launch of a book written and compiled by Associate Professor Norman Sheehan of Swinburne University of Technology in conjunction with Link-Up Queensland titled *Stolen Generations Education*. With contributions from many and a foreword by Sam Watson, chairman of Link-Up Queensland, this book will inform and horrify many but, importantly, the information will enhance our understanding of history. They were tragic times. It is a privilege to be able to call many Aboriginal and Islander people friends and to see their students in our schools engaged in learning and looking forward to bright futures.

However, there is still much to do right throughout our country, be it in remote communities or throughout our urban areas such as Woodridge and Inala. We all wish to see their disadvantage overcome. 'Closing the Gap' needs to be far more than a slogan. Health and education, skills and employment are urgently needed. If I may quote from the book in closing—

Healing is not a cure for disease, healing is a pathway and a journey that leads to a full and complete life for whole communities.

We need to listen and support, not to impose our own ideologies, for their elders often have wisdom far beyond our own. I commend this wonderful scholarly volume to my colleagues in this place and I recommend its wonderful reading.