




Speech By
David Kempton

MEMBER FOR COOK

Record of Proceedings, 28 October 2014

ADJOURNMENT

Coconut, Auntie M

 **Mr KEMPTON** (Cook—LNP) (9.55 pm): Madam Speaker, you have saved the best for last, of course. I would like to pay tribute to Maryann Coconut, an elder of the Thankiwith people on the west coast of Cape York. Maryann Coconut is 72 years of age and has lived in Napranum all her life. In this time she achieved a degree in community management at Macquarie University. In June of this year the Federal Court made a determination in respect of the native title lands for which Maryann Coconut is responsible. Madam Speaker, this is the speech that Maryann Coconut made on that occasion—

Fellow Countrymen, Women and Children

We are here to-day to give thanks to God for this great and wonderful event in the history of our people.

Our Land is being handed back to us after a long time.

We thank the Creator Spirit in giving knowledge and understanding to all the stake holders; such as the Court, the Land Council, including ourselves and others who have worked so hard to make this day a reality.

We are the Caretakers of this Land; given to us by the Creator Spirit who is the Creator.

We acknowledge Him to-day with adoration and thanksgiving.

We the Elders are the Gate Keepers. This is an age old role given to us by our Ancestors. Our knowledge and wisdom of our country is still strong; and will remain invisible and well guarded in our spirit till we die. Our spirit will pass this knowledge on to the next Elder in line.

Knowledge and Traditional Knowledge is sacred.

It can not be bought or grabbed by someone else. It will follow the right protocol, right pathway and the correct channel. This can not be stepped over or crossed.

We the gatekeepers can only open get in and come out and are ourselves at the right time when it is needed. Some people think that while Land was taken away from us without our permission, its cultural values, understanding and stories are gone from us.

I say no to this, because sacredness and wisdom are spiritual values that are in-built in us.

It may be unseen on the outside but visible and seen in our lives and our relationships together.

We come to-day as one people; as gatekeepers and caretakers of the ancient wisdom and culture of our Land and people.

I speak to the Land and Sea and thank them in waiting for us for just a bit longer; and our Creator who is kind, patient and loving enabling our Land to be returned to us for safe keeping.

Let us be happy and join in the spirit of celebration together.