



Speech By  
**Hon. Curtis Pitt**


**MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE**

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Record of Proceedings, 2 December 2015

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Indigenous Communities Futures Summit**

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (2.15 pm): On 19 November I had the pleasure of convening a Communities Futures Summit in Yarrabah with mayors and elected community leaders from Queensland's discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. At the summit I spoke with Indigenous mayors and leaders about how they will take charge of making a stronger and more resilient future for their communities. It is time for government to stop telling Indigenous communities what to do and instead support social and economic development to help them drive their own futures. If we are to address the challenges faced in our remote communities, it is crucial that we start by listening to the people who live there. We want to work with mayors and community leaders of remote communities to improve economic opportunity, wellbeing and quality of life so individuals and families have happy and fulfilling lives. This is a portfolio where we not only need to work more closely across all levels of government but also need to work across all sides of politics. Despite federal funding cuts, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator Scullion, and I have a positive working relationship, and I would welcome the same with the member for Mount Ommaney. I should note that it was pleasing to hear the member speak in support of the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill yesterday, even if it was in the spirit of Christmas. I hope the member is able to keep the Christmas cheer going throughout 2016!

Last week I had the pleasure of visiting Kowanyama, Pormpuraaw, Napranum, Aurukun and the Northern Peninsula area communities of Bamaga, Injinoo, Seisia, Umagico and New Mapoon. My visit provided a valuable opportunity to meet with community members to have straightforward discussions about issues affecting their communities. To move forward with regional development in Cape York, these conversations are essential. In Kowanyama they have been campaigning for a local abattoir to be opened and I had the opportunity to hear about this local business opportunity and tour the proposed site. Should this business prove to be viable, it would not only improve the quality of meat available in the community but also create sustainable employment opportunities for community members. I was able to inspect the DATSIP Retail Store and discuss housing, street lighting and the future of alcohol management plans with community members in Pormpuraaw. Alcohol related harm remains an issue across our discrete communities and we are of course working together on a way forward that will reflect the individual needs and concerns of each community.

In Napranum I visited the impressive new library, local council offices, kindergarten and day-care facilities and met the passionate local staff. Additionally, the reception held by the local council provided an opportunity to engage with community members directly with issues that mattered to them. It was timely to visit Aurukun with the recent concerns for the safety of community members and government employees in town. It was pleasing to see the community was calm and people were starting to return

to their normal daily routines. We know the community continues to face many complex social issues and discussions will continue following this visit with locals, elected leaders and government employees about how to address the challenges ahead. In Bamaga I was taken aback by the ingenious simplicity of the local school's approach to improving both health and education by providing parenting support classes after school. Their Love and Logic program helps parents manage their daily schedules and arms them with really simple parenting techniques to help raise respectful, healthy and smart kids.

At Injinoo we took a tour of the town's health services and homes and community centre. In Umagico I was able to christen the new boardroom by holding its first meeting. The post-construction clean-up had literally finished there just that morning. I will be having to raise issues of funding with my federal counterpart after learning that one of these centres lost funding and also missed out on an opportunity to apply owing to poor communication.

One of the positive common themes that kept coming up was partnerships. I was pleased to learn that Apunipima Cape York Health Council is keen to partner with the primary health network. It is my view that, through respectful partnerships, a higher quality and more holistic service can be provided to the community.

I want to thank all of those who made both the summit and my cape visits informative and enjoyable. I hope to visit other communities as soon as possible to broaden the conversations and continue to work in close collaboration with each of Queensland's remote Indigenous communities.