




Speech By
Joan Pease

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

Record of Proceedings, 1 September 2016

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Murri Court

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (2.36 pm): Recently I had the opportunity to officially open the Murri Court at Wynnum Magistrates Court. It was a wonderful event for the bayside, for our local Murri Court elders, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, Magistrate Zac Sarra and all court staff. The Palaszczuk government committed \$8.7 million over four years to reinstate specialist courts and court diversion programs such as Murri Court. The Courts Innovation Program has been working to implement this election commitment which includes the reinstatement of Murri Courts. A number of Murri Courts have already been reinstated in locations including Cleveland, Cairns, Cherbourg, Mount Isa, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Brisbane and Richlands, and now the beautiful bayside has one in Wynnum.

Extensive consultation with the magistracy, elders and respected persons, community justice groups, members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and other key stakeholders including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service, the Queensland Police Service and Queensland Corrective Services across the state have contributed to the development and rollout of the new Murri Court.

I was thrilled to be at the formal launch of the Wynnum Murri Court and what a celebration it was in the Wynnum Court House. It started with Aunty Joan Hendriks' wonderful welcome to country and the fabulous Yulu Burri Ba Dancers entertaining us, elders and respected persons and our local magistrate, Zac Sarra, who told us how important the Murri Court program is and how it is working. It was a truly wonderful celebration and acknowledgement of this important specialist court.

Murri Courts are so important in our community. They can help to address overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system and can provide a more appropriate experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients of the criminal justice system. Our Murri Court elders, magistrates, government agencies and community service organisations provide great support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander court clients. I am so impressed by the work of our local elders and community justice groups who play an extremely important part of working collaboratively with Wynnum Murri Court and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

The Bayside Community Justice Group works tirelessly with our Wynnum community and I thank them for their great work and dedication, particularly Ms Nova Robertson and co-chairs Uncle Norm Clarke and Aunty Joan Hendriks who represent our community elders well. This is just one of 49 community justice groups across Queensland. I know that many elders are volunteers who work to share their knowledge, life experiences and cultural advice to enhance our justice system and improve services and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Their leadership and ongoing support is inspiring. I know how important the Murri Court is to not only my community but to other communities across the state.

I thank the elders of the Bayside Community Justice Group for their commitment to the Wynnum Murri Court and to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. I thank them for their ongoing passion, drive and commitment. It is so very important and I really value everything that they do.