




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Record of Proceedings, 10 August 2017

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships Portfolios

 **Hon. M FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.10 am): I am proud to say that, unlike those opposite, we are a government that keeps our word. Some 2½ years on, our record speaks for itself when it comes to my portfolio areas of Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Our government has been righting the wrongs of the past, particularly for our Indigenous people.

We have delivered on our commitment to establish a \$21 million reparations scheme to compensate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders who had their wages stolen or controlled under previous government acts. So far we have made around \$11 million in payments to more than 4,300 eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. As part of this commitment, we established the Reparations Taskforce, and we are implementing the recommendations of this independent group.

I am excited to announce today that we are launching a new \$200,000 Indigenous scholarship partnership with Griffith University, delivering on another one of these recommendations. Under the new agreement, we will be offering jointly funded PhD scholarships to two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, allowing them to have a louder voice in national policy, research and academic conversations. We know a collaborative approach is needed in our journey towards reconciliation, and we need local solutions to local issues.

In May I held a meeting with 15 Indigenous leaders in Cairns to share their knowledge and experiences on a range of issues impacting their communities. The Mayor of Palm Island, Alf Lacey, a fantastic mayor, was thankful for such a constructive forum that facilitated genuine discussion on desired outcomes—something he said he had not seen in a long time. A consistent theme I keep hearing as I meet with mayors across the state is how consultative this government is.

Since being appointed as minister, I have also met with executive members of the LGAQ on four separate occasions, which is in line with our commitment. Finally, my department has published best practice guidelines on fairness and equity principles to assist local councils. That is another commitment delivered. That is what we do; we listen to Queensland communities and work with them to deliver the outcomes they need.