




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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ADJOURNMENT

Indigenous Communities

 **Hon. M FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (11.04 pm): Just last month I had the honour to travel to four Indigenous and local government communities in the gulf and Cape York. On Mornington Island with ministerial champion Jen Howard, Mayor Bradley Wilson told me about the council's work they are doing with respect to gathering information on alcohol management. I heard of the need for the right services to support alcohol management, including rehabilitation and detoxification services that were delivered by the former Labor government and subsequently cut by the LNP Newman-Nicholls government. These callous cuts have left communities vulnerable and feeling the pain from the flow-on effects that come when vital services are stripped away. I look forward to receiving further information from council on this issue to take to my cabinet colleagues. I would like to thank the member for Mount Isa for also attending this meeting and for his commitment to working together on a way forward.

In Aurukun, Mayor Derek Walpo showed the incredible progress that has been made in that community over the past two years. I was impressed to see the famous 'Aurukun dogs' sculptures at the Wik & Kugu Art Centre. I also heard about the positive impact the Deputy Premier's Works for Queensland program is having locally. Council received \$2.5 million to expand, renovate and build new accommodation for staff and contractors, creating local jobs and training.

Porpuraaw Mayor Ralph Kendall echoed this positivity on Works for Queensland. I inspected the latest project to be completed there: new contractor accommodation, meaning jobs for locals during construction. I also visited the Community Enterprise Queensland store where feedback about this new initiative, introduced by the Palaszczuk government in July, was absolutely glowing. Mayor Kendall told me more locals are being employed, fresh food is now being delivered weekly and there has been a big price reduction since CEQ came into effect. This is another example of our commitment to these remote areas and to reducing the cost of living for all Queenslanders, particularly those in rural, remote and discrete communities.

Finally, I visited Burketown to meet with Burke Shire Mayor Ernie Camp. I saw the benefits the new fibre-optic cable is bringing the community, with better education outcomes for students and opportunities for business. We were privileged to go to the school and meet some of the students, the staff and the principal of the school. Mayor Kemp also showed me the wharf pontoon project. It was great to see the Palaszczuk government's investment, which contributed around 12 local jobs.

I do thank the mayors, councillors and community members who welcomed me to their regions last month and I look forward to returning in the future. The local authority members, mayors and councillors in those regions do an outstanding job. Sometimes they do it tough, but on the back of that they do deliver a sound investment and prosperity in their communities.