




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Indigenous Councils, Grants

 **Hon. M FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.10 am): The Palaszczuk government's commitment to serving Queenslanders around the state is unparalleled. In particular, the way in which we support those living in remote Indigenous communities is something I am incredibly proud of as a minister in this Labor government.

In this year's budget, the Palaszczuk government has allocated \$39 million to Aboriginal councils from three state government grant packages. The largest of the funding programs is the \$34 million state government financial aid program which includes an increase in 2017-18 by almost \$3.4 million. This funding is vital for councils to continue to deliver front-line local government services for their communities.

Councils use these grants to help them provide core services as well as sustaining local government jobs and services such as public safety officers, waste management, water treatment and supply, gas, drainage, flood mitigation and natural disaster resilience. This is essential funding for these communities. It is essential funding that the Newman-Nicholls administration thought should be cut. The previous government decided to freeze the indexation rate of the state government's financial aid program, denying Aboriginal councils the opportunity to provide these crucial services. Not only has the Palaszczuk government restored the indexation rate, we have restored the funding for the program to the level it would have been if the indexation had not been cut by the LNP.

Another important funding package is our Indigenous Local Government Sustainability Program. Under the program, Queensland's 16 Indigenous local governments have been allocated more than \$500,000 by the Palaszczuk government to spend before the end of this financial year. Recently it was exciting to announce that the Woorabinda Aboriginal Shire Council has used \$100,000 of its grant to purchase a new front-loaded tractor. This will help the council deliver a number of local projects and keep jobs and training opportunities within their community. It is only a Palaszczuk Labor government that will keep delivering funding projects such as these to Indigenous communities across Queensland. Once again the Palaszczuk government is righting the wrongs of three years of cutting, sacking and selling by Tim Nicholls, the former treasurer.