




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2017

ADJOURNMENT

Liberal National Party

 **Hon. M FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (7.10 pm): I rise to bring to the attention of the House the failures of the Liberal National Party at both the state and federal levels when it comes to the announcement of our first nations people. Under the previous Queensland LNP government, significant funding cuts were made to front-line government agency services aimed at supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and families. In 2013 the LNP government cut more than \$1.1 million in funding from non-government organisations in the community sector that provides support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The funding was stripped away from some of the most disadvantaged communities in Australia. Organisations like the Cape York Remote Area Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Care Advisory Association had more than \$180,000 stripped in funding cuts by the LNP. An amount of \$280,000 was cut from the Townsville Aboriginal and Islanders Health Services and nearly \$180,000 was cut from the Palm Island Community Company in the electorate of the member for Townsville.

What is clear is that these essential front-line services will be the first to go if the LNP is ever returned to government, particularly if they are in coalition with Pauline Hanson's One Nation party. The member for Clayfield will continue his record of cutting, selling and sacking. When it comes to the Leader of the Opposition's masters in Canberra, let's say that the rotten apple does not fall far from the tree. In fact, only today we have seen a desperately divided federal LNP government walk away from the most important constitutional reform. The Uluru statement was a road map for further reconciliation and national unity, a message from the heart of the nation.

We have a weak Prime Minister controlled by dog whistlers and also obstructionists in the extreme right wing of the party. On constitutional reform, Malcolm Turnbull said that it would be 'too ambitious' and that he would not support their push for a constitutionally protected Indigenous voice to the Australian parliament. Fifty years ago this nation voted—and recorded a 90.77 per cent yes vote—to recognise Aboriginal people in our Constitution. Mr Speaker, can you imagine the now deceased Dr Evelyn Scott not having the ambition to continue down that path, claiming it was too ambitious to make that decision? Where would we be now as a nation? I was so proud to be in the company of the Premier, Minister O'Rourke, Minister Enoch and also the member for Townsville and the member for Thuringowa in Townsville not long ago at Dr Evelyn Scott's state funeral. I was proud to be part of that ceremony and celebration of her life in this country and in this state, who made our first nations' plight so much better for not only Indigenous people but also all Australians.