




Speech By
Cynthia Lui

MEMBER FOR COOK

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ADJOURNMENT

Cook Electorate, Art

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (7.28 pm): Cook is home to the most amazing art in the region and today I am proud to stand here to talk about the talent that exists in my electorate. Our art is most sought after and, for the art enthusiast looking for something different and exciting, Cook delivers with unique Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and contemporary art in various forms from painting, print, carving, pottery, ghost nets, mosaic and recyclable art, to name a few.

Through my travels I have come to appreciate the stories being told through art and the showcasing of rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and non-Indigenous contemporary art, which create awareness for the different issues affecting communities in Far North Queensland. It is noted that the style of art varies significantly between communities.

Lockhart River, on the eastern side of Cape York Peninsula, continues to produce world-class art. Its vibrant, contemporary canvas paintings have been exhibited on both national and international stages. During my recent visit to Lockhart River, I had the opportunity to meet some very talented artists who clearly paint with heart and soul to tell stories of the deep connection they have to country and place.

In Cooktown, I visited the Cooktown Art Society and met with many wonderfully talented artists from that community. The Cooktown Art Society provides a warm and friendly space that is open to all members of the community to display their art. There is a more contemporary style of art, leaving me with an impression of coastal living. There were paintings, mosaics, mobiles and much more. I was particularly impressed with the sea dragon made entirely from driftwood collected from the shores around Cooktown and neatly sculptured to produce a magnificent piece of art.

The Pormpuraaw Art and Culture Centre on Cape York Peninsular and Erub Arts in the Torres Strait take pride in the creation of extravagant ghost-net art that depicts wildlife. However, those magnificent pieces of art bring light to a very important environmental issue: marine pollution. Ghost nets or fishing nets are often discarded and left to float aimlessly in the ocean, slowly contributing to the killing of vulnerable marine life.

Art is clearly an industry with a huge potential to grow. In those communities, abundant talent has the capability of building more than just an industry; it has the capacity to build up people by creating opportunities to increase knowledge of and skills for art, as well as business and marketing. It supports future employment and long-term economic growth. Furthermore, it contributes to the social and emotional wellbeing of a person and the whole community, as people are more inclined to get in touch with the environment for inspiration. Art is more than what meets the eye; it is an avenue for opportunity in a region that lacks industry. I look forward to working closely with communities to tell the story of Cook and Far North Queensland.