




Speech By
Hon. Leanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts) (5.05 pm): Let me begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather. In doing so may I acknowledge the some 3,000 generations of Turrbal people and Jagera people who have performed ceremonies, conducted trade and maintained cultural practices on this land. I also acknowledge all of our elders, those who have passed and those who are still with us guiding us into the future.

I also pay special respect to my family, who have continued to be my greatest source of support and encouragement—to my mother, Lyn; my brothers, Wesley, Rodney and Andrew; and, of course, my two sons, Callum and Ethan, who sacrificed so much to support their mum being in this place. I am honoured to once again serve the people of Algester as part of the Palaszczuk Labor government. I am delighted to speak about some of the important priorities in my electorate.

Public transport is a vital service for my community. Buses in particular are important not only for the convenience of commuters but also as a means of reducing traffic congestion and pollution. During the state election I was proud to announce the \$21 million upgrade of the Greenbank RSL bus station's park-and-ride facility, which will deliver an extra 600 car parks for commuters. This investment in public transport services is part of the government's \$114 million commitment to upgrade park-and-ride facilities across South-East Queensland and will provide a substantial boost to local services.

The people of Algester also rely on our world-class public hospital system. Logan Hospital is a vital health service for our community and the Palaszczuk government recognises that a growing region needs a growing hospital. We have committed to a \$281 million redevelopment of the Logan Hospital over the next five years. Importantly, we are also supporting the growth of maternity services at the hospital and funding five extra delivery rooms and a further 10 to 14 cots in the maternity ward. This is a \$12.6 million commitment to maternity services at the Logan Hospital. I am proud to be part of a government that is delivering that funding for my community.

Every MP knows that a local election commitment is a team effort, and I have a great team. I am incredibly grateful to the hardworking volunteers and staff who contributed to my campaign. Of course, this is just some of many in a long list of people who assisted, but in particular I thank Don Fraser, John Ferrie, Barry and Janess Petersen, Tony Bergman, John Tapp, Kane Singh, Davina Moore, Maria Halwood, Cassie Cusack, Peter Chalmers, Fatima Elmi, Neil Smith, Jorgen Gullestrup, Jennilyn Mann, Rose Matters, my aunt—Aunty Fay Reid—and supporters from the CPSU. I would also like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of my electorate staff, Louise Ryan, Shelley Flores, Taylor Seawright and Angus Kennedy.

Following the election I was honoured to accept the Premier's invitation to take up the portfolio of Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts. This is an exciting portfolio through which we can protect our important biodiversity including the iconic Great Barrier Reef, grow our thriving science sector and promote the talent that exists within Queensland's arts community.

During the state election Labor was up-front with the people of Queensland about our commitment to environmental protection. We released a policy statement that clearly outlined our priorities around biodiversity conservation, including our intention to end broadscale tree clearing in this state—which we have now done—and introduced an innovative fund to support Queensland land sector carbon projects. As I have already informed the House, work has commenced on the Land Restoration Fund. The fund is Labor's visionary commitment to tackle climate change while creating new jobs in a growing industry. We are also committed to the protection of the Great Barrier Reef, and this forms one of our key Advancing Queensland priorities.

With science at the heart of everything in this portfolio, we know there is a great deal of research that shows the devastating impact that climate change and poor water quality are having on the reef. As the minister responsible for this important environmental asset, I am committed to ensuring that we do everything in our power to protect the health of the reef for generations to come. One of the most important practical steps the Palaszczuk government is taking to reduce pollution in our oceans and on our land is banning single-use plastic bags. As well, on 1 November this year we are introducing a container refund scheme. These two initiatives are an important step in addressing the accumulation of waste in the environment. Environmental scientists have been telling us for years about the damage that plastic does to native wildlife, and now it is time for action.

In all areas of my portfolio science is critical. Queensland boasts some of the most innovative researchers and academics in Australia, and it has been my privilege to be the minister for the sector for the past three years. STEM—science, technology, engineering and maths—has long been a priority for the Palaszczuk government, and I look forward to continuing our work in that area over this term of government.

In the portfolio of the Arts, the Palaszczuk government has announced that we will deliver a new \$150 million performing arts venue at QPAC. As Minister for the Arts, it is a privilege to oversee the biggest infrastructure spend since GOMA. This new theatre is an exciting investment and will support how we tell our stories through the arts.

As many here know, I am a proud Nughi woman of the Quandamooka nation, which takes in the waters and islands of Moreton Bay. I am originally from North Stradbroke Island. We call it Minjerribah. In 2015 I was proud to stand in this House and speak as the first Aboriginal woman ever elected to the Queensland parliament, and I am honoured to be elected to serve a second term. I am also honoured to be serving with the member for Cook—another amazing woman who made history as the first Torres Strait Islander person to be elected to any parliament in Australia. I would also like to acknowledge the member for Mirani, who is the first South Sea island descendant elected to the Queensland parliament.

Being the first at something brings with it particular pressures. There are many expectations from all quarters when you are in this kind of role. Importantly, there is a responsibility to play a role in changing things for the better, a role in recognising our shared history and a role in setting direction to mend our collective past and unite us for a brighter future. Our history as a nation did not start in the 1770s at the point of European contact: it began more than 60,000 years ago. It did not begin some 10 generations ago when ships arrived from across the seas: it began close to 3,000 generations ago. Regardless of your cultural background, if you call yourself a Queenslanders, an Australian, then that is fundamentally your history.

As Queensland lives with its history and plans for its future, the rightful place of first nations peoples in our country and our willingness to reconcile history with our ambitions is continually pressed. It is a source of uneasiness and uncertainty, and it is time to do something about that. It is time to bring some certainty to the situation. Queensland has an opportunity to resolve a confounding element of Australia's social contract—a contract that has never been made with the first nations peoples of this country.

In the 19th century the Federation of Australia failed to achieve reconciliation. It failed to do what had been done in other Commonwealth countries: recognise the first peoples. Towards the end of the 20th century the High Court's dismissal of the legal fiction of terra nullius in response to ongoing native title interests was a step forward in agreement making. Since that time we have seen various forms of agreement making between governments, industry and first nations peoples around specific activities with varying degrees of success. We have invested in the reconciliation movement and seen a growing understanding of the richness that reconciliation can bring to relationships and to our collective social,

environmental and economic outcomes. Although these actions have made significant contributions, they have avoided what is at the heart of the concerns regarding agreement making, but now the states and the Commonwealth have another opportunity to resolve the nature of agreements.

With a history of petitions, marches, letters and never-ending campaigns, the demands from first nations peoples has remained constant and clear. It is a demand for respect and recognition. It is my strong belief that agreements between us demonstrate a measure of that respect, and the avenue to carry that respect is the idea of treaties. As we know, Australia is the only Commonwealth country not to have entered into a treaty with Indigenous peoples at the time of contact. In May 2017 the Referendum Council, which was established in 2015 by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and opposition leader Bill Shorten, held a First Nations National Constitutional Convention at Uluru to discuss and agree on an approach to constitutional reform to recognise first nations peoples. At the convention Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates from across the country adopted the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*.

The Uluru statement, among other things, highlighted the need for a process for agreement making and truth telling between governments and the first peoples of Australia. For me, these are the fundamentals for moving the relationship with first nations peoples and government forward in Queensland. Any process for agreement making must, of course, be founded upon mutual respect for Australia's first peoples—that includes respect for the Commonwealth of Australia and the state of Queensland as expressed in the respective constitutional frameworks—and in equal measure respect for the ancient and ongoing rights of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples on this ancient land.

Queensland has an opportunity to speak the truth of our shared history, to seek out the stories that have been ignored or papered over, and to place those truths at the heart of our relationships so that meaningful agreement making can occur and treaties can progress. It is through truth telling and treaties that we can finally set the rightful course of this state and nation—a course that respectfully includes the interests of first nations peoples for a brighter future. I support a course of action that creates a mutual path of respect for the ultimate purpose of agreement making, of treaties, between our peoples.