




Speech By
Hon. Leanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Member for Everton; Treaties

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts) (2.21 pm): Former Australian of the Year, General David Morrison, utilised a well-known quote in a speech that he delivered some years ago as part of his campaign to champion gender equality in the Army. He said—

If you become aware of any individual degrading another, then show moral courage and take a stand against it. The standard you walk past is the standard you accept.

As leaders and representatives of our communities in Queensland, as members of this parliament, we have a particular responsibility to show moral courage and take a stand when we see or hear behaviours that are not in keeping with what a modern and progressive Queensland expect. This morning, in the contribution from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the member for Everton, we heard an appalling display of inappropriate race related comments. To make comparisons between the Deputy Premier and Treasurer of this state, who has a proud migrant background, with an Iraqi dictator is nothing less than appalling.

This focus on race and not substance is not what good debate or leadership looks like. Sadly, this is not the first time it has happened and, unfortunately, without the moral courage to call it out, it may not be the last time. The comments made this morning belong in the same bucket as those made recently by a Fraser Coast councillor regarding my race and by former One Nation and now former Katter's Australian Party senator for Queensland, Fraser Anning, regarding immigration.

This sort of language—the language of stereotypes and the language of ignorance—does not represent modern Queensland. Modern, progressive Queensland is crying out for truth telling and partnerships, not this dismissiveness. Those of us on this side of the House will call out this type of behaviour whenever we see it. I call on those opposite, in particular the Leader of the Opposition, to do the very same when she looks at her own team.

In Queensland, partnerships between government and first nations people have also been impacted at times by the language of stereotypes and ignorance. The stories regarding partnerships have not always been positive and nor have they always borne the results that are needed for progress. Over many decades, successive Queensland governments have made attempts to work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to build a relationship of mutual respect and partnership. There have been a number of signposts along the way to guide agreement making in Queensland. The landmark determination regarding native title provided a platform for future agreement making. The introduction of Indigenous land use agreements created a framework for practical agreements regarding the use of land and waters. Cultural heritage laws, Queensland's joint management agreements for the care and maintenance of protected areas—all of this in Queensland has allowed us to lay the groundwork for agreement making with traditional owners for many years with varying success.

The next step is to see those relationships and practices embedded in something that will take us into the next century, that being the negotiation of treaties. Other countries and states have embarked on this journey. In Victoria, the government has been progressing work towards a treaty since 2016. Queensland should not be left behind when we have already done so much work in this space.

This is about truth telling, agreement making and self-determination for first nations people in Queensland. We are on the cusp of meaningful truth telling and agreement making in Queensland. This is a time when we must find common ground, acknowledge the truth, rebuild, restructure, reconnect and work together for a better future. We want a nation that has the courage to face truth openly and can come together for reconciliation, to recognise and commemorate the past, and celebrate a unified future.

To succeed, we need to move beyond our political differences in the chambers of our parliaments. Truth telling and agreement making is not something that any of us should fear, but something that we could embrace, and should embrace. Treaties will not divide our country; they will unite our country. Now is the time.

Queensland has already done so much work to bring us to this point. Now, we need to take the next step. Of course, we also need to ensure that we call out behaviours that are not in step with the rest of Queensland. When we have heard this undertone of racist comment that has been sitting inside some of our politics, this is not what Queenslanders want for the future. When we heard the member for Everton make those comments this morning, it should have been a red flag to everybody in this House that we should never tolerate that and that we should always be looking for ways to embrace the truth, to embrace our ability to have agreement making and partnership in this state. Treaties are one way to do that, but another way is to call out appalling behaviour like that from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.