




Speech By
Michael Healy

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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ADJOURNMENT

National Reconciliation Week, UMI Arts

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (12.16 am): Last week I had the great pleasure to visit UMI Arts in my electorate and address the assembled group of community elders at their morning tea celebration for National Reconciliation Week. UMI Arts is a not-for-profit company managed by an all-Indigenous board of directors. It is the peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and cultural organisation for Far North Queensland, which is an area that extends from Cardwell all the way to the Torres Strait islands and west to the Gulf of Carpentaria. It was established in 2005, and its mission is to operate an Indigenous organisation that assists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to participate in the maintenance, preservation and protection of cultural identity.

UMI Arts also operates the Cairns Indigenous Arts Centre, which provides support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists who live and work in Cairns. It was at their premises at 335 Sheridan Street, North Cairns that I attended the National Reconciliation Week morning tea. This organisation is run by Mr Peter Lenoy, a man I met just prior to the election. He is a man of absolute substance. His mother was one of the stolen generation. He is a peaceful, hardworking, solid Australian and he has a wonderful background and story. His contribution to our community is significant.

National Reconciliation Week, 27 May to 3 June, was initiated in 1996 to celebrate Indigenous history and culture in Australia and foster reconciliation discussion and activities. The dates commemorate two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey: the successful 27 May 1967 referendum and the 3 June 1992 Mabo High Court decision. Reconciliation promotes and facilitates respect, trust and positive relationships between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It opens up a national debate on prejudice, discrimination and racism. It also raises broader questions about our national identity and the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and rights in our nation's story. As I said earlier, Mr Peter Lenoy is working extremely hard with a group of very talented Indigenous Australians, and I want to make mention of that here in the chamber this morning. The man is making a wonderful contribution to our society.