



Speech By  
**Cynthia Lui**


**MEMBER FOR COOK**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 May 2019

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Early Childhood Education, Puuya Foundation**

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (2.34 pm): Our children are our future and giving them a good start in life is critical for their growth and development. Education is the key to success and it is vital that it starts as early as possible. I particularly want to talk about the Puuya Foundation in the Lockhart River community in Cape York. I have had the pleasure of meeting with Puuya Foundation staff and members a few times now since coming into office, with my most recent visit being just last week with the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Minister Bailey, the ministerial champion for Lockhart River.

Puuya Foundation offers a range of programs in the community for the young to the old, but I cannot tell you enough of the drive and passion they have to invest in the early childhood years. Puuya started in the early 2000s with a group of dedicated individuals employed by the Queensland government. One could say that the Puuya Foundation was born out of the shock of disadvantage this community faced and the potential that it had for community led change. Puuya Foundation offers early childhood programs in the community with a long-term vision and aspiration to achieve positive educational outcomes and close the gap for educational disparity in the community. What is most inspiring is the work they put into providing a safe space for small, non-school-age children to learn, engaging parents in their children's learning as a way to build family capacity and close involvement in their child's education journey.

Puuya Foundation provides a safe haven for the children of Lockhart River to learn, experience and encounter education from a very young age. Children learn from everything they see, do, hear, feel, smell and taste and everyone they interact with—those they talk, play and laugh with. This builds their social confidence, resilience and positive social skills.

Denise Hagan, a pioneer of the Puuya Foundation, still lives in Lockhart River and is very committed to the children and people of this community. I would like to thank Denise, Aunty Dotty and the Puuya Foundation board members and staff for their ongoing commitment to influencing change in this community. I feel extremely proud of the Lockhart River community, a discrete remote Aboriginal community in my electorate which is leading the way to address social disadvantage by investing in our children from a very young age.