



Speech By  
**Hon. Craig Crawford**

**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 October 2021

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Path to Treaty**

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.30 am): On 29 September this year the Palaszczuk government took a historic step forward in our state's reconciliation journey by returning over 160,000 hectares of land back to the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people. I had the privilege of joining Minister Scanlon at a ceremony held in Bloomfield, north of Wujal Wujal, where the historic land hand back documents were officially signed. I also acknowledge the Minister for Resources who did a large degree of work behind the scenes. I was humbled to witness the emotions of elders who had fought for three decades for their rights. This is reconciliation at work. This was a visible and tangible part of healing and in consideration of this year's NAIDOC theme of 'healing country'.

During my visit, I also had the pleasure of visiting the Wujal Wujal community and the Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council and took part in what I believe is the most beautiful and personal welcome to country that I have ever received. During my visits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Queensland, I experience firsthand the resilience of communities, the rich culture there is to offer and the stories waiting to be told.

I recently visited Mithaka Country, land situated in the red sands and gibber plains of far west Queensland's unique Channel Country. Mithaka Country features vast sandstone quarries, cultural stone tool manufacturing sites and ancient ceremonial stone arrangements shaped like constellations in the night sky. For the first time, researchers are unearthing archaeological clues about transcontinental trading routes and, seemingly, the civilisation of pre-contact Aboriginal societies.

Using the latest in scientific breakthroughs, the rock-strewn desert plains of Mithaka Country are only now surrendering their secrets—hidden for thousands of years—that may yet change the historic narrative of our First Nations people. The Mithaka Aboriginal Corporation is establishing partnership agreements with various research institutions, including the University of Queensland and Griffith University, to investigate and better understand this spectacular cultural landscape.

There are many sites and stories in Queensland, just like this one, still undiscovered and untold. That is why this government is committed to reconciliation and truth telling. As truth telling forms a key part of Path to Treaty, I am pleased to report that it is steadily progressing. This month, the Treaty Advancement Committee held a community session in Brisbane, reporting on truth telling and healing, and the establishment of a future Treaty Institute.

After many months of hard work, as the Premier reported, the Treaty Advancement Committee officially handed over the report to the Premier this week. Queenslanders can expect the Palaszczuk government's response to the report in the coming months. When it comes to reconciliation in Queensland, we know there is still a lot to be done, but we are committed to paving the way forward for generational change.