



Speech By  
**Hon. Craig Crawford**

**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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Record of Proceedings, 1 December 2021

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Torres Strait Islanders, Cultural Recognition Order**

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.09 am): Our historic path in our state's reconciliation journey has seen the Palaszczuk government establish the Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa (Torres Strait Islander Traditional Child Rearing Practice) Act 2020, which came into effect on 1 July 2021. Many significant steps have been taken. Earlier this year we saw: the appointment of the inaugural and independent commissioner, who commenced his duties on 12 July this year; the opening of the commissioner's office in Cairns on 17 August; and then our first application process opening on 7 September.

Today I am able to advise the House that the commissioner has made the first cultural recognition order in Queensland. In fact, this is the first in the world. This world-first outcome heralds a new era of opportunity for Torres Strait Islander children and families to experience the same basic rights as every other Queenslanders—to enrol in school, to access services and support, and to pursue aspirations in work, study and life. A cultural recognition order enables a birth certificate to be issued that reflects a child's cultural identity and lived identity experience. It permanently transfers the parentage to the cultural parents.

Today we share in one of the strongest acts of reconciliation in our state's history as we progress a Path to Treaty in Queensland in the granting of legal recognition of Torres Strait Islander traditional child-rearing practice. This significant moment in our state's shared history speaks volumes for the tireless dedication, commitment and advocacy by generations of Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, including over 30 years of advocacy by the Kupai Omasker Working Party.

Each step of this journey has been achieved by Torres Strait Islander people working in partnership with the Queensland government through a reframed relationship to achieve legal recognition which recognises Torres Strait Islander people's right to their identity, to practise their own culture, traditions and enduring customs, and for their children to grow up with their family. Queensland and the nation have stood witness to the spirit, diversity, resilience and culture of Torres Strait Islander people as we have progressed recognition of Torres Strait Islander traditional child-rearing practice into law—and now into real life.