




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

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ADJOURNMENT

Star of Taroom

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (6.09 pm): I have spoken before about the Iman people and the town of Taroom, my mother's home town. I have spoken of how I and my family have no doubt benefited from the dispossession of the Iman people from their lands. My desire for reconciliation is genuine, and I believe it is shared by most Australians. We have a deep rift at the centre of our shared history that needs to be actively healed.

Recently I had the wonderful opportunity to participate in returning the Star of Taroom to the Iman people. Removed from Iman lands, the star is a celestial marker—one of a network that helped guide the Iman people to the Bunya Festival. It is a thing of great beauty, now resting in the Iman section of the Taroom Museum. I encourage all people to make the journey to see it.

Johnny Denalis, at the request of his father, who had removed the star, worked with a team of volunteers to return the star to its rightful owners. They walked this star, a 100-kilogram rock, from Brisbane to Taroom—over 500 kilometres. I joined the walk from Wooroolin to Wondai with Johnny and other volunteers, elders—including my uncle Father Vince Carroll, and my cousin Bette Dines. It was a special and a spiritual day. We were allowed to touch the rock and given support to understand the country we were walking through by neighbouring Wulli Wulli people Uncle Bob Clancy.

I returned to Taroom on 24 July for the arrival of the star. It was really wonderful to see the Iman people celebrating their culture, being proud of their culture and being so welcoming and forgiving. There was a sense of healing not just for the Iman but also for Taroom. I acknowledge Uncle James White, who took a great deal of time to explain much about the Iman culture to me and my wife. I definitely want to thank the elders of the Iman Wardingarri Aboriginal Corporation. I also acknowledge the member for Lockyer, who joined the walk for part of the journey as well. I thank the member for Cooper, who helped Johnny Denalis get a bit of a start on this project. It was a pleasure to meet the member for Cooper in Taroom, show her around the town and share afternoon tea at Stoney Crossing, a place where my mother and her brothers learned to swim. It was a pleasure to watch my second and third cousins swimming there that day.

After the official duties, it was fantastic to retire to the Leichhardt Hotel, where we shared a few beers, dinner and games of pool. Most importantly of all, we talked together honestly, which was possible because we had walked together honestly. As I looked around the pub that night, surrounded by my extended family interacting with Iman and non-Iman people who were brought together by a desire to the right thing, I realised that reconciliation is a really big thing but we will only get there via lots of little steps. This, the Star of Taroom, was a really important step.