




Speech By  
**Hon. Leeanne Enoch**

**MEMBER FOR ALGESTER**

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**NATURE CONSERVATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION (INDIGENOUS JOINT MANAGEMENT—MORETON ISLAND) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (3.46 pm): Under standing order 260 and on advice from the Clerk of the Parliament, I declare that I am a Quandamooka woman—a fact that I have already declared in my register of interests, and I declare again for the House. The Quandamooka people are traditional owners of the lands and waters of Mulgumpin, also known as Moreton Island. In the Jandai language of the Quandamooka people, ‘Yura. Ngari goorijen tabbilban Quandamooka,’ which means, ‘Hello. I am a saltwater person from Quandamooka country.’ I am a direct descendant of one of 12 apical ancestor groups recognised by the Federal Court of Australia who comprise the Quandamooka people. I am not a member of QYAC, the prescribed body corporate. I have removed myself from any decision-making processes that have led to this legislation being brought to this House.

Having said all of that, I rise to make a short contribution to the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation (Indigenous Joint Management—Moreton Island) Amendment Bill. This is an important piece of legislation that follows an historic native title consent determination in November 2019 which recognised the Quandamooka people’s native title rights over Mulgumpin. This follows the tireless efforts of the Ngugi elders and Quandamooka people more broadly who have dedicated much of their lives to see Mulgumpin rightly returned to the Quandamooka people. I want to make mention of some of my family who are here in the gallery but also those who are no longer with us, in particular Aunty Joan Hendriks—a woman who had great love for her family and her country and, even in the face of incredible pressure, still remained strong on the collective vision of the Quandamooka people for greater control of our own lands. I also want to acknowledge the many Quandamooka people who have contributed to the work of QYAC, the prescribed body corporate, the Minjerribah Mulgumpin elders and the many more who have been part of the deep and sometimes challenging conversations that have taken place over the years.

This has not always been an easy journey. I remember very clearly the day in July 2011 when native title for Minjerribah was recognised. There was incredible relief and elation, and after more than 15 years of effort families came together to celebrate the much welcomed win. For my father, who has now passed away, his brothers and sisters—my uncles and aunts—my children, cousins and other family members it was an enormously jubilant time, but that jubilation has at times been very much challenged. I love my family. We do not always agree on things, but that love for family and country and a hope for a future that builds on the past remains. It is unfortunate that many of the contributions from those opposite, not just in the chamber but in the community, have helped foster a great deal of division among our families.

I do not imagine many people know what it is like to see your family members in strong conflict with each other, sometimes in physical conflict with each other, over the issues that have been raised during the native title process and the divisions that some members in this House have contributed to in their efforts not only in their contributions today but also in their actions in their own electorates. I

think there are some who would like to see Quandamooka people in dispute with ourselves so that they can distract the broader community from the big transformational opportunities that could be the reality. That kind of desire to see First Nations people in conflict with themselves is a well-used strategy of colonisers right across the world. We have seen some of that in terms of some of the contributions from those opposite.

I have been taught from a young age—and I am reminded of it every day in the conversations that I have with my family—that culture heals everything. There is the opportunity in this legislation to ensure that culture becomes part of how First Nations people, the Quandamooka people, interact with their own country and find that healing for their country and, of course, the families that are connected to it. This bill formalises the next step in recognising First Nations people and will allow Quandamooka traditional owners to care for and manage the protected area estate on Mulgumpin in partnership with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

The amendments to the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 will also ensure the land is identified as transferable land allowing it to be rightfully returned to the traditional owners. Protected areas on Mulgumpin have been managed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service since the first national park was declared on the island in 1966. That was 55 years ago. For more than half a century there has been no legal capacity to enter into formal joint management arrangements with the Quandamooka people, the First Nations people of the land. Now this bill delivers land justice. It recognises Quandamooka people and it helps to facilitate greater self-determination. It protects and promotes the rights of the Quandamooka people, the first peoples of Mulgumpin. It also recognises the importance of connection to country.

Australia is often described as a young country, but we are, in fact, an ancient land and home to the world's longest continuous living cultures. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been managing country for longer than anyone in the world and our stories tell of a rich history of land. Quandamooka people have thousands of generations of history and connection with our country. It is only right that traditional owners are at the forefront of caring for country. Joint management of Mulgumpin will also open up new opportunities to enhance visitor experiences through the showcasing of Aboriginal history and culture and this opens the door to vital truth telling about our shared past.

What we need in Queensland is an avenue for truth telling and partnerships as we continue our journey to reconciliation and we begin on the path to treaty and treaties and the sharing of our history—the sometimes uncomfortable, ugly history that is the history of this state. It is a history that we have seen in Mulgumpin in terms of past massacres—frontier wars that our ancestors have been part of. That should be recognised.

As we embark on a new frontier of challenge as Quandamooka people, as Mulgumpin people, as Ngugi people, the challenges will be there for us, but they are our challenges to face; they are not the plaything of political parties. As families we will work on that ourselves. That is the only way that culture will heal for us and our country. We do not need members of the opposition here interfering in family business. Family business is family business. As First Nations people we will heal ourselves through our own culture.

**Dr Robinson** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Walker): Through the chair, thank you.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Ms ENOCH:** The interjections from the member for Oodgeroo only prove what I have just been talking about. The member for Oodgeroo continues to get in the middle of families, continues to divide families, pitting brother against sister. This is absolutely an example.

**Dr ROBINSON:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find those comments offensive and I ask them to be withdrawn. They are untrue.

**Government members** interjected.

**Dr ROBINSON:** I thought a point of order was okay. If I am being libelled and slandered I am happy to take a point of order any day.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Take a seat, member for Oodgeroo. I ask the minister, if she wishes, to withdraw.

**Ms ENOCH:** Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I withdraw. The truth is that past partnerships have not always been positive, but this bill and joint management of Mulgumpin is a step in the right direction, not just for Quandamooka people but more broadly in our journey towards treaty and treaties. This state is on the precipice of ensuring that First Nations people are in the front seat in terms of our management

and our ability to self-determine going forward. This bill represents that light on the hill in terms of ensuring that First Nations people can have that hope that we will have our lands returned to us, that we will be trusted and that our families will be able to manage that ourselves and remain connected to our country going forward. Of course, treaty and treaties will be part of that story. I commend the bill to the House.