




Speech By
Hon. Craig Crawford

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

National Reconciliation Week

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.35 am): I begin by offering my support for the Premier's electricity rebate, especially for our seniors, many of whom are facing significant cost-of-living pressures. Today's announcement will go a long way.

Voice, treaty, truth: three significant words; words that began once as a movement and that are now forming parts of government policy across this state and across this nation. As an Australian, as a Queenslander and as a minister in a Labor government, I was filled with emotion when our Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, used his victory speech on Saturday night to give a full commitment to the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

This clarion call puts First Nations people at the pinnacle of federal government policy. As we move into National Reconciliation Week 2022 we are challenged by this year's theme: 'Be Brave. Make Change'. I want to recognise my fellow cabinet ministers in this Palaszczuk government who lead departments through significant change in embracing First Nations culture and a new age of doing government business. As a nation and as a state we are embracing that challenge. Across this country we are witnessing a change that many thought they would never see in their lifetime: a change that embraces a national identity that is grounded by two of the oldest living cultures on the planet; a change that requires us to be courageous in our commitment to truth telling and honest about our shared industry; a commitment to voice, treaty and truth.

Last month I joined the Waka Waka people as the Federal Court of Australia formally recognised them as native title holders of almost 114,000 hectares of the Burnett region. This landmark decision comes after a long, hard fought journey to win back land justice. Under native title law, the Waka Waka people had to prove they still had connection to their lands, and they did. This moment was a shining light in what has been a deep, dark history of dispossession of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in this state, one that built on the 30-year legacy of the High Court Mabo decision which overturned the legal fiction of terra nullius, or 'nobody's land'.

Every move we make to right the wrongs of the past such as acknowledging the native title rights of traditional owners is a positive step on the path to truth telling, healing and true reconciliation. Traditional owner James MiMi spoke about what it meant to get native title over Ban Ban Springs, a sacred site and traditional meeting place and the home of the piebald eel.

It is my hope that path to treaty and native title provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to live dignified lives, generate wealth, create jobs and build career pathways for Indigenous youth. This is our opportunity to recognise the past, respect one another and reset the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders toward a fair, just and united future.