



Speech By  
**Cynthia Lui**


**MEMBER FOR COOK**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 October 2022

## **PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT**

### **Cape York Peninsula, Land**

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (2.47 pm): Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a remarkable connection to land that spans over tens of thousands of years, relying on the land for sustenance and shelter. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander connection to land goes beyond the physical realm of what meets the eye. First Nations people's connection to land includes seasons, creation spirits and heritage. Country is a place of belonging. It forms a strong foundation to self-identity, belief system and is, above all, home.

On 7 September, I had the pleasure of joining the Premier, Minister Scanlon and Minister Butcher in the Northern Peninsula Area in Cape York for an historical land handover ceremony. It was an absolute pleasure to be part of this momentous occasion, to witness more than 362,000 hectares of land on Australia's Cape York Peninsula being handed back to the Gudang/Yadhaykenu, Atambaya and Angkamuthi peoples in a very special ceremony between traditional owners and the Queensland Palaszczuk government. Made up of 319,300 hectares of national park and 42,799 hectares of Aboriginal freehold land, which is equivalent to 676,000 football fields, it included land formerly known as Jardine River National Parks, Denham Group National Park, part of Heathlands Reserve and Jardine River Reserve and two offshore islands.

It was such a moving ceremony and one I was very proud to be a part of: the traditional songs, the dancing, the stories about connection to land and the long journey for legal recognition as the original custodians of the land, and then, of course, the historic signing of the land handover between the Queensland government and the four traditional owner groups in Cape York. The land will be granted to the Ipima Ikaya Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC and the Atambaya Aboriginal Corporation on behalf of traditional owners.

The Queensland government and the Gudang/Yadhaykenu, Atambaya and Angkamuthi peoples, represented by Ipima Ikaya Aboriginal Corporation, have also agreed to joint management arrangements over the two national parks. I want to acknowledge the Premier and the Queensland government for their ongoing commitment to reframing the relationship with Queensland's First Nations peoples and actually being on the right side of history in writing a new chapter in our state's history.

The history of First Nations communities is one that is rich and diverse and is intrinsically linked to the land. The land handover ceremony is a positive step for First Nations communities to seize new opportunities and make sure their story, their history that has been passed down for many generations, continues long into the future.