




Speech By
Cynthia Lui

MEMBER FOR COOK

Record of Proceedings, 29 November 2022

MOTION

Voice to Parliament

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (11.45 am): I rise today as a proud lamalaig woman from Yam Island in the Torres Strait and a proud member of the Palaszczuk Labor government. I proudly stand today to support this motion because the Uluru Statement from the Heart has three objectives: Voice to Parliament, treaty and truth. I feel proud to support this motion because for the first time in history we have a federal government committed to taking the bold step to walk with First Nations people together—it is not symbolic or divisive, just hope for the future. Finally we have a seat at the table to have input into improving policies. For us as lawmakers, it is about acknowledging, accepting and looking beyond the traditions of fixing. It is about working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

While I am on my feet I would like to table the Uluru Statement from the Heart for the benefit of the member for Mermaid Beach.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Uluru Statement from the Heart' [1982](#).

I would encourage him to take some time out to actually read what the Uluru statement is saying.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have the lowest socio-economic outcomes in this country, and let's talk about that. In health, our people are dying young. In education, we are struggling to see positive outcomes because to get our children to graduate we must first address layers and layers of social problems. We have the highest representation of First Nations people being incarcerated, the group that is always being deemed to be the most disadvantaged and the group that everyone feels sorry for because for some reason society has come to see us as the group that just cannot seem to get it right. We can get it right. It is about giving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders a Voice to Parliament. If we are ever going to meaningfully close the gap we need the voices of our people, like those from the communities across Cape York and Torres Strait in my electorate, to be heard at the highest level of government. Enshrining anything in the Australian Constitution simply means we are protecting it under law from future changes in government.

It is disappointing to hear some of the questions and views of those opposite about the Voice to Parliament. For far too long Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been living under policies that have always been made just for them. Now there is a chance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have a voice at the table, to talk about policies that affect them, to improve the lives of people in this state and, most importantly, we can become a more inclusive society where everyone has the same opportunities and we can live life as one.