




Speech By
Hon. Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Record of Proceedings, 16 August 2022

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Path to Treaty, Native Title

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (10.08 am): Our government is committed to reconciliation and healing, to building, strengthening and reframing our relationships with First Nations people. Recognising native title is vital to Queensland's pathway towards reconciliation as it may assist in preserving Indigenous culture, values and of course traditions. As a government, we are committed to working on the Path to Treaty and working with Indigenous people to recognise native title.

In the 2021-22 financial year my department resolved 12 native title determinations and there have been a further five title claims resolved since then, the most recent determination being for the Gulf Country's Kurtijar people.

Last month, Kurtijar traditional owner Fred Pascoe said that the Federal Court's decision to recognise native title was important for the past, present and future of his people. Mr Pascoe said—

It also gives us a chance to teach our young ones coming up that this is their country as well, and they've got the right to enjoy that country, but they've also got the responsibility of looking after it. To me, that is the most important aspect of the determination.

These powerful words show the importance of recognising native title. I can inform the House that native title is now recognised in more than 535,000 square kilometres of land in Queensland or, in other words, more than 30 per cent of this state.

Native title is vital for Queensland's pathway to reconciliation and treaty and helps to preserve Indigenous culture, values and traditions. I am proud that my department works alongside Indigenous Queenslanders such as the Kurtijar people to formally recognise and celebrate their deep connection to country. Successive Queensland governments have returned more than 6.25 million hectares of land to their traditional owners under the state's own Indigenous land legislation introduced under a Labor government in 1991. That legislation gives traditional owners inalienable freehold title to their land—land that cannot be sold and that is held forever for future generations.

I can also advise the House that consultation is well underway on the proposal to rename the iconic Fraser Island to its Indigenous name, K'gari. We have actively worked with the Butchulla people to recognise the cultural significance of K'gari. On the Path to Treaty, recognising Indigenous language through proposed changes to place names like K'gari demonstrates our government's commitment to truth-telling and reconciliation.

The Palaszczuk government will continue to work with First Nations people to formally rename insensitive sites. Currently, consultation is open on proposals to rename Black Gin Creek near Longreach to Watyakan Creek, as well as renaming Blackfellows Creek, south of Cairns, to its traditional Yidiny name of Bana Gindarja. All of this work is important and as a government we will continue to work in collaboration with First Nations people on the Path to Treaty and reconciliation.