



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR SOUTH BRISBANE

Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2023

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Palaszczuk Labor Government, First Nations Justice

 **Dr MacMAHON** (South Brisbane—Grn) (2.49 pm): In the past fortnight we have seen the LNP shamefully use First Nations justice as a political football in a cynical attempt to scrape together a few more votes for next year's election. It is appalling that the LNP cares more about using truth-telling and treaty as a wedge for Labor rather than standing up for First Nations people. To back away from the commitment to truth-telling and treaty that we all laid down in Cairns just a few months ago is unconscionable.

It is disappointing to see the Premier seemingly taking the bait and abandoning what principles Labor do have when it comes to First Nations justice. Instead of racing to the bottom on who can be the cruellest when it comes to First Nations justice or locking up kids, both Labor and the LNP could have some courage and win votes by fighting for the things that will actually make Queenslanders' lives better. How about freezing rents and fighting for everyone in Queensland to have a safe and affordable place to call home? How about full funding for health care, schools or bringing down the cost of electricity permanently? How about taking on the electricity corporations and bringing down the cost of electricity permanently? How about taking on Coles and Woolies, who are price gouging Queenslanders, and making sure that every Queenslander can afford their groceries? What about fighting for genuine changes in the lives of Queenslanders instead of throwing First Nations people under the bus to score political points a year out from the election?

It is shameful. Frankly, it is shocking to hear Labor say they need bipartisan support to pursue meaningful change in Queensland like treaty, and we are still waiting for the truth-telling inquiry to begin. Are Labor really going to wait for the LNP's support to make real, transformative change in Queensland? If so, we are going to be waiting a long, long time. We could and should be pushing for genuine changes we need to ensure justice for First Nations people right now.

Queensland can have treaty, truth-telling and justice. In a wealthy state like ours we can ensure that all First Nations people have the things they need for a good life and we can start today. This government could start by ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not risk their lives in our state's watch houses and prisons. They could raise the age of criminal responsibility, helping keep First Nations youth out of watch houses and prisons. They could ensure that First Nations families can ask for help and support without the risk of the state taking away their children. The government could ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services and housing services are autonomous and fully funded. We could ensure that every First Nations family has a secure and safe place to call home. There is nothing to stop us from acting now except a lack of political will.

Both Labor and the LNP could have some courage and not back down on truth-telling and treaty, which we all committed to just a few months ago. We could get to work today implementing real and meaningful changes that will improve the lives of all Queenslanders.