




Speech By
Hon. Craig Crawford

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

Record of Proceedings, 19 April 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Voice to Parliament

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.12 am): The Palaszczuk government stands united with the Prime Minister and with all state and territory leaders in declaring our support for a constitutionally enshrined Indigenous Voice to Parliament. We stand with all of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who call to be recognised in our nation's Constitution. The Voice will give Indigenous Australians the ability to inform policy and decisions that will directly impact their lives. The Voice will help improve the outcomes for Indigenous education, health, housing, safety and economic development. When Indigenous Australians have a say through the Voice, it will deliver an opportunity for real and practical changes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. That is why, on this side of the House, we are voting 'yes'.

Last night at a 'yes' campaign event here in parliament Noel Pearson, one of the architects of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, urged the state Liberal National Party to make a sensible decision and support an Indigenous voice. In his words, 'This is the state of Eddie Mabo. This is the state that really has to be at the forefront of the referendum.' He said, 'Let's not make the country and Indigenous people victims of a confected political fight between left and right, progressives and conservatives. That is not what this is about.' I acknowledge the members from all sides of this House who attended last night's event, and I thank the co-chairs for organising it.

I have travelled the length and breadth of Queensland. I have visited almost every discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in this state. The common message that I receive from elders, families and leaders is that they are frustrated that no-one consults with them about key matters. They have expressed with me in many ways that they want a dialogue with government. They want a say; they want a voice. When Peter Dutton says, 'How does Voice help close the gap?' it is exactly this dialogue with people on the ground in community and in suburbs that will achieve this. This is not a voice just to Canberra; this is a voice to government at all levels including ours. How can the conservatives turn their back on a respected leader like Ken Wyatt, who has worked on this process for years along with others like Noel Pearson? LNP MPs should say, 'If this is good enough for Ken Wyatt then it should be good enough for me.' We have listened to the people in this state and we are acting. Our vote in the referendum will be 'yes'.