




Speech By
Cynthia Lui

MEMBER FOR COOK

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Path to Treaty

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (2.45 pm): I want to begin by acknowledging the First Nations people of the land on which we meet and pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging. Queensland is home to two of the oldest richest living cultures in the world in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. I stand here today as a proud First Nations woman from the Kulkalgal nation of the Torres Strait and one of three First Nations members of parliament. Today I am giving my voice to my First Nations brothers and sisters across this state to speak to the Palaszczuk government's bold commitment to establishing treaty or treaties with First Nations peoples in Queensland.

Path to Treaty is the journey to a new shared future between First Nations and non-Indigenous Queenslanders. The Queensland government started this conversation in 2019, with reconciliation, truth-telling and healing at the heart of the dialogue. The move towards Path to Treaty has been a long time coming and I applaud the Palaszczuk Labor government for its courage to enter a place where no other government in the history of this state has ever gone before. Treaty gives us the opportunity for truth-telling to set the record straight. When Australia was first discovered, it was not discovered on the basis of truth. Instead, the land was discovered and claimed terra nullius, translating to 'no-man's-land'. This ugly terminology set the foundations on which Australia was built upon and it was because of this terminology that our ancestors—my ancestors—faced their fate. Blood was shed. Families were torn apart, with children forcibly removed. Missions were set up and operated by churches. Culture was denied. While terra nullius gave new hope and opportunities for new settlement, severe trauma and pain formed the basis for First Nations people that would eventually be passed down over countless generations.

The very foundation that this country was built upon denied Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' right to be seen or heard. From that very first point of contact, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples existed as nobody on no-man's-land. Sadly, the recount of history gives us two very different recollections: the white history, one that portrays glory and achievement; and the other, the black history, one of great sadness and loss. I cannot fathom what my First Nations ancestors had to endure and today to our past, present and emerging I say, 'I hear you.'

I condemn every past government policy that stripped and debilitated our First Nations people. I condemn every past government policy that was created to segregate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from society. I condemn every past government policy that encouraged racial divide and hate in this state. We will never be able to rewrite the past; it is not possible. What is possible is embracing treaty to its fullest intent where we write a brand new chapter in our state's history that allows us to fully acknowledge and accept that Queensland has a dark history, that we make the ultimate commitment to focus on deep healing and that we continue to walk this path together and work that

little bit harder to reconcile our history towards a more unified state—one with a shared history. It saddens me that people that are closest to my heart—my grandparents, my parents—were all affected by these hideous policies.

Today I represent all those who did not have a voice, standing in solidarity with our Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, and the Queensland Labor government on the right side of history to right the wrongs of the past. Treaty gives us hope for the future. I believe that treaty is the agent of change that will influence social, economic and political discourse for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. While I look to the past to give me strength and wisdom to do what is right, I want to fully embrace this moment as I look into the future to give hope for generations to come.