




Speech By
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PATH TO TREATY BILL

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (5.01 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Path to Treaty Bill and I do so in awe of my First Nations parliamentary colleagues and their beautiful contributions in this debate. We begin every parliament with an acknowledgement of country, of the world's oldest continuing living culture. Every time I reflect on this, whether it is here or out in the community, it just blows my mind. The treaty is about the fact that, as the member for Bundamba has so beautifully reflected, for the last few hundred years we—Indigenous Australians and non-Indigenous Australians—have had a shared history. This shared history means that we need to forge a new partnership together. As the Uluru Statement from the Heart speaks about, it is a fuller expression of our nationhood.

We do not yet know what form the treaty will take. In fact, I recall the words of Uncle Mick Gooda early on in the treaty process—and I acknowledge his presence in the gallery today—that there will not be just one treaty. Sometimes stepping together into the unknown can be scary; I understand that. So we are fortunate indeed to have a country so close to our own in both location and culture that has had a treaty in place since 6 February 1840, the Treaty of Waitangi—Te Tiriti o Waitangi. I refer, of course, to our sister nation, New Zealand, or Aotearoa. It is the birth place of some pretty great people including my father, Dave.

I must say that as a child I did not fully appreciate the differences between the two nations. However, I do recall a couple of light-bulb moments that really made me appreciate the differences in our relationships with our First Nations peoples. The first was hearing my little niece, Dylan, aged just five, singing the New Zealand national anthem in perfect Maori after school one day to my nan. I was so impressed that it was taught in both languages, something that my father had not experienced back in the 1970s. My nan said to me at the time, 'A five-year-old can do it, but I bet you can't, Jess.' It took me a year but I got there.

At this time of year I must say I feel my Kiwi heritage particularly strongly. All of the Anzac Day services in my local community now include the New Zealand national anthem, which is now sung not just in English but also in the language of the First Nations people. It is taught in every school and I understand that it has been since the 1990s. In my research I actually found that one of the very first times the anthem was performed in both languages was in Queensland for the Expo in 1988. That was one of the first public performances. What a beautiful part of history for us to share with our New Zealand brothers and sisters.

I just cannot convey the emotions I feel when I hear these anthems sung together in both languages. It feels like a joining of two stories and it is so beautiful. As you can hear, it makes me quite emotional when I sing it. I am proud as a white person, as a Pakeha, to have learnt the anthem in both languages as does every school student in New Zealand.

The second moment was when I attended the Auckland War Memorial Museum, which I have done many times on my visits back to Aotearoa, which features a significant amount of Maori artefacts. If honourable members go to their website they will see it is bilingual. Every heading is also in Maori. There are the two cultures walking side by side. The war museum commemorates the fact that these Maori people fought for their land. These wars are documented in the Auckland War Memorial Museum.

I firmly believe that the reason for all of these things, the reason we see this fuller expression in Aotearoa of this culture, is because of the treaty that was established so long ago, back in 1840. We can observe some things, some outcomes, from the New Zealand experience. No, it was not a magical overnight fix for the systemic injustices that colonisation brought. What it did do was bring a powerful lens to take into account the experiences of First Nations people every single step of the way in every aspect of their culture.

Path to Treaty has taken such a long time to reach. There will be benefits to First Nations people—of that we can be sure. However, there will also be benefits to each and every Queenslander because the treaty is about moving forward together. I commend the bill to the House.