




Speech By  
**Jim Madden**

**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH WEST**

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Record of Proceedings, 9 May 2023

### **PATH TO TREATY BILL**

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (6.30 pm): I am pleased to rise to speak in support of the Path to Treaty Bill 2023 as well as the amendments proposed by the minister. I begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet. I would also like to thank the Community Support and Services Committee, the committee secretariat, Hansard and the submitters. Also, Deputy Speaker, I would like to say how pleased I am that I am making my contribution while you are in the chair.

The primary purpose of the Path to Treaty Bill is to establish foundational legislation to drive Path to Treaty, including formation of a First Nations Treaty Institute to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in preparing treaty negotiations with the Queensland government and a Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry to inquire into and report on the effects of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This is a landmark bill that was introduced to the Queensland parliament on 22 February 2023. The bill furthers Queensland's Path to Treaty commitment made between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous peoples on 16 August 2022. Provisions informed by discriminatory practices of the past which are still present in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and Other Matters) Act 1984 will also be amended by this bill.

As said so well in the preamble of the bill, the Parliament of Queensland will recognise for the first time what we all know to be true and are self-evident—

- 1 Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Queensland are made up of many distinct communities and groups, each with their own unique laws, traditions, languages, culture and traditional knowledge.
- 2 Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples successfully governed their lands, seas, waters, air and resources for at least 65,000 years prior to British colonisation of Queensland.
- 3 The colonisation of Queensland occurred without the consent of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and often against their active resistance.
- 4 Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples assert they have never ceded their sovereignty over their lands, seas, waters, air and resources and they continue to assert their sovereignty.
- 5 Aboriginal peoples have a continuing responsibility for their lands, seas, waters, air and resources under Aboriginal law and Aboriginal tradition. Torres Strait Islander peoples have a continuing responsibility for their lands, seas, waters, air and resources under Torres Strait Islander law and Ailan Kastom.
- 6 The colonisation of Queensland and the dispossession of the lands, seas, waters and air traditionally occupied and used by Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples had a devastating, and ongoing, impact on Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- 7 The foundation for a respectful and mutually beneficial relationship between Aboriginal peoples, Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Queensland community generally is to provide for processes and opportunities to hear the voices of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

- 8 The process of truth-telling will help inform the Queensland community generally and help heal the trauma suffered by Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as a result of colonisation. The process will inform treaty negotiations between Aboriginal peoples, Torres Strait Islander peoples and the State, highlight the resilience, enduring culture, law and knowledge of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and demonstrate how these strengths are priceless assets for Queensland.
- 9 Treaties between Aboriginal peoples, Torres Strait Islander peoples and the State will act as recognition of the impacts of colonisation and the State's commitment to working with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples to build a new future.
- 10 The truth-telling and path to treaty processes will provide measurable economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits for Aboriginal peoples, Torres Strait Islander peoples, the Queensland community generally and the State.

A treaty or treaties will set the foundation for a shared future between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Queensland government. It will allow for all parties to come together and negotiate a new way of working and set the foundation for a positive coexistence.

In closing, I would like to quote what the Premier of Queensland Anastacia Palaszczuk said about the bill. She stated—

Our government is determined to deeply understand our past, to acknowledge the pain and suffering, and to build a better future together.

Queensland's Path to Treaty signals an opportunity to walk into a much brighter tomorrow, and this landmark Bill is a crucial next step toward that after the commitment made last year.

*I thank the Interim Truth and Treaty Body for their guidance, including in co-designing this significant Bill.*

*I urge all Queenslanders to find in themselves the courage to finish this unfinished business, the compassion to walk in other people's shoes and the commitment to make the most of this opportunity.*

I commend the Path to Treaty Bill 2023 and the amendments proposed by the minister to the House.