




Speech By
Hon. Leanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Path to Treaty

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts) (10.01 am): I want to associate myself with the contribution of the police minister. They were some very moving and beautiful words.

Mr Speaker, as you say in this House at the start of every parliamentary sitting day, we are very fortunate in this country to have two of the world's oldest continuing living cultures in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, whose lands, winds and waters we all now share. Queenslanders are aware of that today more than ever. Sadly, they are now more than ever aware of the gap in life outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Queenslanders. They are now more than ever aware of the urgent need to close those gaps.

In 2020, we joined all other jurisdictions in this country in signing the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The year before that, we began our journey towards treaty and truth-telling in this state with our *Statement of commitment to reframe the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Queensland government*—a commitment we took to the 2020 election. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition and the LNP he leads, the Palaszczuk government remains committed to closing the gap and committed to the promise we made to Queenslanders when this parliament passed the landmark Path to Treaty legislation earlier this year.

Today I am pleased to advise the House that we are taking the next steps on our path to treaty and truth-telling. Expressions of interest are now open for members of both the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry and the First Nations Treaty Institute. I acknowledge the members of the Interim Truth and Treaty Body for the significant work they have done to progress the Path to Treaty in this state. Some of them are here today in the gallery. They are Mick Gooda, Aaron Fa'aoso, Cheryl Buchanan, Sallyanne Atkinson, Michael Lavarch, Seleena Blackley, Marg O'Donnell, Bianca Beetson, Natalie Siegel-Brown and Ray Rosendale. They collectively have facilitated 887 engagement sessions across the state with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Queenslanders since they were established last year. It is this work that has been crucial to informing these next steps. I thank the ITTB for their work and their support with community preparedness for truth-telling ahead of the establishment of the Treaty Institute and, of course, the important inquiry.

The five members of the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry will be appointed, with the majority of members being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. At least one member must be a legal practitioner of over five years standing and with experience relevant to the functions of the inquiry. Membership will also reflect the gender diversity of Queensland. The First Nations Treaty Institute will comprise two co-chairs and eight members, all of whom will be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. They will also need to have standing within community and will collectively reflect the cultural, geographical and gender diversity of Queensland.

We will harness the expertise and experience of the inquiry and institute members to develop a shared truth in relation to the often confronting nature of this state's past and the impact of harmful and discriminatory government policies. We cannot collectively make a difference in closing the gap without first understanding the true history of this state and the reason these gaps in life outcomes exist in the first place.

The journey of reconciliation has always been characterised as one of hope and optimism. In Queensland, the reconciliation journey has been long and has weathered many challenges, particularly in recent months. The path to treaty will no doubt face its own challenges over the years to come, but it is a journey and a path that is worthy of steadfast commitment—worthy of the promises we make and keep in this place and worthy of our collective resolve to get this done.