



Speech By
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PATH TO TREATY BILL

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (2.53 pm): There can be no denying the profound nature of the legislation we debate in this parliament—the magnitude of its possibility. The connection that our First Nations people have to country and culture is undeniably profound. Our colonisation history is brutal. It is traumatic. It is unjust. The reality is that in modern-day Queensland so too is our present. This bill is about the future—an opportunity to share history, often uncomfortable, and to reframe and reshape our future together.

I want to start by expressing my wholehearted appreciation of many First Nations people for their generosity. I thank those who have taken the time not only to talk with me and with others about this history and the traumas but also to educate and inform us around the cultural depth of First Nations people and culture. Undeniably, this is an ancient, valuable culture; in spite of all of the colonisation attempts to extinguish or erase it, it endures. Across our state I see the celebration and legacy we create of the last 200 years of history. I want to see that change, to evolve and accurately reflect and acknowledge our First Nations history—having a state that can appreciate the truth of our 200-year dark past and to do better to understand and appreciate the thousands of generations that came before. That is powerful, meaningful and worthwhile.

I viscerally recall my first exposure to this dark past. It was through learning of our stolen generation as a teenager. It was not through conversation but rather through reading the report that I located through an assessment with a free choice on the topic. It was by chance that I located that report that day—chance that I stumbled across it. While it detailed information, it did not allow me to develop a really deep understanding. This was but one horrific policy that parliaments have legislated and implemented throughout colonisation. The list is long, confronting and shameful. Our history needs to be honestly discussed. It needs to be understood. It needs to be documented. It needs to be taught. Most importantly, it needs to be never repeated.

We acknowledge that First Nations people have never ceded their sovereignty. In fact, they still assert it. This is unfinished business, and it is long past due. We are all on this journey and, while it will be confronting and difficult to embark upon, for First Nations people most especially, I acknowledge the faith, respect and goodwill in embarking upon treaty or treaties in Queensland.

This enduring connection that our First Nations people have to country is what this bill will focus on. I commend the work of the Premier, the First Nations members of this parliament—the members for Algera, Bundamba and Cook—and all involved in bringing this work to a place where the Path to Treaty Bill can be legislated. For all that work, it is only the beginning. The path to treaty will take courage, honesty and trust. In First Nations Queenslanders I see and hear something remarkable. In spite of all that has transpired I see that strength. I see their determination.

Here we stand on the country of the longest continuing culture in the world. It is imperative that that connection to country, history, culture, language and law is strengthened, continued and preserved—to be understood and embraced. It is in this bill that we focus not just on the past and the present but also on the future, on building a brighter future together. I commend the bill to the House.