




Speech By
Hon. Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

First Nations, Land Transfers

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (10.11 am): Earlier this month I travelled to Tully to formally return more than 40 hectares of state owned land to the traditional owners, the Gulngay people. The Gulngay people now hold the land as inalienable freehold—land that cannot be sold and is held forever for future generations. Although it was a small ceremony, the significance of this transfer to the Gulngay people cannot ever be overstated. For some of us, it can be challenging to fully comprehend the profound significance of First Nations people's connection to country. For First Nations people, the land is not simply the ground that they walk on but a living, breathing entity filled with stories, traditions and ancestral knowledge. It is a sacred place that has sustained and nurtured them for more than 60,000 years. As a government, it is our responsibility to continue this legacy and strive to create a future that is inclusive, respectful and just for all.

As Minister for Resources, I am proud to play a small part in Queensland's Path to Treaty. Whether it is through native title, transferring state land or using traditional languages in place names, we are committed to preserving First Nations cultures and values. I inform the House that since 2015 we have returned more than one million hectares of state owned land to traditional owners. Since 2015, native title rights have been determined to exist over more than 210,900 square kilometres of Queensland. That sounds like a big number—and it is—but let's put that in perspective: it is about the size of Victoria.

We have wiped 15 racist placenames off Queensland maps—including one in your electorate, Mr Speaker—and renamed cultural sites to remember the language of our traditional owners. It is not just about the numbers; it is about the tangible impact this recognition has on the lives of First Nations people. As a government, we remain committed to recognising the rights, history and culture of our First Nations people and their connection to land. By working together, we can create a better Queensland for all.