




Speech By
Hon. Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Record of Proceedings, 13 June 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

K'gari

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (10.03 am): I, too, joined with the Premier and some of my cabinet colleagues in being welcomed by the Butchulla people onto their country for the historic name restoration of K'gari. It was certainly a wonderful day, an amazing day and a very emotional day. Generations of Butchulla people came together at their sacred site to welcome K'gari back home. I thank the Butchulla people for their hospitality and for their patience and willingness to work with the Palaszczuk government to achieve this momentous outcome.

K'gari is the name of the white spirit who was sent down from the sky by the god Beeral to help his messenger Yindingie make the land and seas that are home to the Butchulla people. She is a female white spirit who is beautiful; she is the Butchulla people's mother. She provides food, water and shelter and in return, they protect and preserve her.

As the minister for resources, I had the pleasure of returning 19.5 hectares of land back to its traditional owners. The land comprises four parcels—two at Eurong and two near Maheno Beach. The Butchulla Native Title Aboriginal Corporation now hold this land as Aboriginal freehold land. This means that it can never be bought, sold or mortgaged and that it will be held forever for the benefit of the Butchulla people. Just like any other freehold, it is now private land for the use of the Butchulla people. As Butchulla elder Aunty Gayle said on K'gari last week, these blocks of land, linked to spiritual areas, will now be used to strengthen their traditional customs for generations to come.

There are few places in this world that are so peaceful and that have the breathtaking beauty that we see on K'gari. Although she looks good for her age, K'gari has certainly had a lot of help along the way. Professor James Shulmeister of K'gari's World Heritage Committee was recently quoted in an article as saying that 'the landscape you see is the actual result of 60,000 to 70,000 years of Indigenous occupation and Butchulla land management'. What we have today at K'gari is a direct result of the cultural obligations and land management practices of the Butchulla people and their ancestors. Who better to look after K'gari than the people who have cared for and maintained her for the last 60,000 years? We will continue to recognise and honour all First Nations communities, traditions, cultures and their continued connection to land and waters of this great state that we live in. It was an absolute privilege and pleasure to restore the rightful name of K'gari to the Butchulla people. It always was, and it always will be. I would like to present the parliament with the first official map of K'gari containing the first official name change. I table that.

Tabled paper: Map of K'gari [789](#).