




Speech By  
**Shane Knuth**

**MEMBER FOR HILL**

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Record of Proceedings, 10 May 2023

### **PATH TO TREATY BILL**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (11.48 am): I rise to talk to the Path to Treaty Bill and acknowledge that the Indigenous people were the first inhabitants of the nation we proudly call our home. I make mention of many First Australians I am friends with—those I went to school with, played footy with and worked with shoulder to shoulder at the Queensland railways right throughout the state. I also recognise and thank the many First Australians who have attended here yesterday and today.

From the outset I want to highlight the confusion in the general public about Path to Treaty and the Voice to Parliament and what both of them mean. I would say that most people recognise and respect our First Nations people as the first people of the land. This government is high on rhetoric and tokenism but lacks any real meaningful action when it comes to making a difference in the lives of those living in Indigenous communities. I understand that a \$300 million Path to Treaty Fund is being provided for the treaty process; however, I cannot find any of this funding being used to directly benefit and better the lives of the Indigenous people living in communities in Queensland.

The KAP has had a strong record since Bob Katter was the state minister for northern development and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs. During this time the Katter leases were created under the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Land Holding) Act 1985. However, in 1991 the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991 were introduced by the Labor Goss government into the Queensland parliament as new principal pieces of legislation applying to Indigenous land. The introduction of these acts created issues for the existing lease applications and also meant that no new applications could be made, which was a tragedy for Indigenous landowners. The KAP has continued to pursue title deeds for Indigenous people throughout the state through its state members. We also vehemently opposed the corporatisation and privatisation of Queensland Railways from consecutive Labor governments that eventually resulted in the loss of thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.

The member for Traeger has on three occasions presented changes to the blue card system through his blue card bill. The current blue card system is currently holding back employment opportunities for Indigenous people in communities right across the Far North. This issue was brought to the member for Traeger by Indigenous leaders who were sick and tired of discrimination against those wanting to secure work in their communities. On all three occasions the bill was voted against by the government and opposition despite widespread support from Indigenous communities and leaders across Far North Queensland. If the changes were adopted, we would have seen a safer alternative to the current system and the ability for self-determination by Indigenous people and access to vital job opportunities. This was the voice of Indigenous people through the member for Traeger's actions yet was voted against by the government and opposition.

The KAP has also pushed for the return of market gardens to address the high cost of food transportation to communities and to help pursue a healthier lifestyle. Again, this is still being rejected. The \$300 million would be better spent directly on providing better outcomes to big issues that Indigenous communities are facing such as access to better health services, including dialysis and

diabetes treatments, access to education, jobs and the development of economic opportunities, and access to cheaper, healthier food. This funding would go a long way to providing equal opportunity for Indigenous people to services and opportunities that we all enjoy. For those here today, we are all North Queenslanders, we are all Queenslanders and we are all Australians. Every one of us deserves equal opportunity and equal access to basic services, but we need real action, not more talk, broken promises and tokenism.