




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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PATH TO TREATY BILL

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (4.15 pm): I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, the Gimuy Walubara Yidinji peoples, the Djabugay and the Yirrganydji peoples, and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging. I also acknowledge the deep connection that First Nations people have with the land, rainforest and sea. As the Minister for Women, I particularly acknowledge the role of First Nations women who, for 3,000 generations, have provided wisdom, leadership and protection to two of the world's oldest continuous living cultures.

Queensland is enriched by its unique First Nations heritage and by its cultural history and traditions. Addressing the ongoing impacts of colonisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities is long overdue in Queensland. Significant injustices persist to this day—injustices that we, as a society, must overcome and that we, as legislators, must take responsibility for amending.

I am honoured to serve as the Ministerial Champion of the Torres Strait. I acknowledge that Queensland is enriched by the culture and traditions of this unique and distinct culture. I am so privileged to work in that role alongside the member for Cook, who is the first Torres Strait Islander elected to any parliament in the world. The people across Zenadth Kes have welcomed me into their homes and their hearts, and have shared with me an abundance of knowledge and stories. In particular, my adopted Torres Strait mother, Aunty Rose, even bestowed upon me my own traditional Torres Strait name, Dana Kuth. That name is derived from the emblem totem crocodile, and means 'vision'. With the member for Cook, so many other advocates across Zenadth Kes and so many people in this chamber, for the first time in Queensland's history we helped cultural lore—L-O-R-E—become law—L-A-W—with the passing of the Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa bill. That is something that I was very proud to be associated with.

The Path to Treaty Bill takes active steps towards healing and creating a new relationship for all Queenslanders to prosper and deliver better economic, employment, health and housing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is an opportunity for us to begin to write the wrongs of the past, confront our shared history and collectively determine how we want to move forward. The bill will establish the mechanisms that will advance Queensland's Path to Treaty with our First Nations Treaty Institute and the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry. The bill's preamble recognises the strength of truth-telling in healing the trauma suffered by First Nations peoples because of colonisation.

The over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our criminal justice system is unacceptable. That is why our government has committed to developing and implementing a long-term whole-of-government and community strategy. To lead this work, we have established the First Nations Justice Office to develop and implement a strategy co-designed with First Nations community controlled organisations, individuals and communities. This strategy will contribute to achieving our commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap to reduce incarceration

rates of First Nations adults by 15 per cent and young people by 30 per cent by 2031. First Nations voices and experiences will be at the heart of that work, with a clear focus on respecting self-determination.

We have also established *Queensland's framework for action: reshaping our approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domestic and family violence* and a First Nations family violence prevention group. The framework provides a new way of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in the spirit of reconciliation to address the causes, prevalence and impacts of domestic and family violence because we know that historical and current events and issues impact the day-to-day existence and wellbeing of all Australian First Nations women and girls and that racism and gender inequalities compound these. However, we also know that First Nations women and girls are strong, brave, determined and resilient. They have remarkable skills and knowledge and boundless potential. Gender equality for everyone will only be realised when outcomes for First Nations women are addressed.

Through truth-telling and healing we will be able to reconcile our past and the harm that colonisation has caused and continues to cause. Path to Treaty is the critical next chapter in our history. We must understand and acknowledge the true history and origins of our state so that we may journey forward together hand in hand and determined to leave Queensland a better place for the next generation. I commend the bill to the House.