




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Record of Proceedings, 1 May 2024

MOTION

Path to Treaty

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.53 pm): I start by saying 'Happy May Day' to everyone and note that some of the greatest trade unionists ever have been Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Next week the Greenslopes Reconciliation Action Group is hosting a community event highlighting the great work of the Yiman people, Johnny Danalis and many others in returning the Star of Taroom to the Yiman people. This was a powerful act of reconciliation which has been good for the Yiman people, good for the community of Taroom and good for our entire state. The GRAG, as it is known, is made up of local people who voluntarily give up their time to work towards reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I worked with local community members to set up this group with the support, encouragement and endorsement of Reconciliation Queensland.

Our community voted yes to the Voice to Parliament. The GRAG actively campaigned in support of that referendum. While we accept that the people of Australia did not accept the proposal in the referendum, we utterly reject the notion that Australians are walking away from reconciliation. It is extremely disappointing that the LNP has used this referendum outcome to turn its back on the Path to Treaty and on Queenslanders of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent. It is very sad to see that the LNP seems to be on a unity ticket with One Nation.

The member for Mirani often rightfully raises issues in this chamber about the treatment of people of South Sea islander descent; however, he seems to totally miss the irony of this advocacy given the stance his party has taken and its history in relation to other minority groups, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. I ask the member to listen to the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. When I chaired the select committee into ways to improve the lives of people with mental health and addiction issues, we spent time meeting with and visiting a range of First Nations communities across this state. I tried to capture their key messages in my chair's foreword to that report. I stated—

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples consistently told the committee of the intergenerational trauma caused by colonisation, and subsequent government policies, and the significant impact on the mental health and wellbeing of their communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples told the committee that efforts to achieve justice like the Uluru Statement from the Heart, Path to Treaty, and reconciliation programs are not tokenistic, but are welcomed as genuine attempts to heal the scar at the core of our society, which continues to have an enormous impact on their lives.

We simply cannot close the gap if we do not do these things. We are doing these things because First Nations people have asked that they be done. We know that the outcome of supporting this motion is to widen the gap. It will make life worse for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, whether they live in Holland Park, Kirwan, Yarrabah or Saibai Island.

When the member for Mansfield was the principal at Cavendish Road State High School, I remember her announcing with great pride on assembly at Cavendish Road that the entire region had achieved 100 per cent QCE attainment for students who were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Of

course, if the motion put by the member for Mirani was supported, such measures just would not happen; in fact, the gap would widen. If we support this motion moved by One Nation—and sadly it seems the LNP is heading in the same direction—we will see: increased suicides, increased incarceration rates, decreasing educational outcomes, decreased life expectancy, increased impacts of domestic violence, and increased rates of mental health and addiction.

This is not just for a group of people in some far distant land; this is for our mates right here in Queensland—our friends, our neighbours, our school mates, our work mates, our parliamentary colleagues. Is this the Australia we want? I can confidently say that this is not what the members of the Greenslopes Reconciliation Action Group want.

The Member for Mirani says that we have no mandate. What mandate does he have in representing one seat in this parliament? I ask him that. Be honest, member for Mirani: what mandate do you have? Does the member have a greater say in what is correct with his party just representing one seat? The motion calls on us to do more in relation to cost of living. Member for Mirani, I agree with you, and we will be doing more.

Tackling the cost of living does not mean we cannot also come into contact with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Governments must be able to deal with multiple issues at once and there are always competing priorities. Each day the member for Mirani stands when the Speaker acknowledges the traditional owners. Clearly the member, unlike most in his party, seems to have some sort of respect for traditional owners. I urge the member to abandon this motion and this rhetoric. Abandoning his party would be the best thing forward in terms of its cruel attitudes and policies. I urge the LNP to reject this motion and to get back on the Path to Treaty. Labor will walk with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Queensland. We will walk proudly on a Path to Treaty.