



Speech By  
**Hon. Leeanne Enoch**

**MEMBER FOR ALGESTER**

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Record of Proceedings, 1 May 2024

**MOTION**

**Path to Treaty**

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts) (4.33 pm): I move—

That all words after '1. Notes' be omitted and the following inserted:

- 'the Path to Treaty Act 2023 was passed with bipartisan support in May 2023;
2. notes that the government remains committed to the Path to Treaty Act 2023 as legislated which commits our state to a path of reconciliation and dedicated efforts to closing the gap in life outcomes of First Nations Queenslanders; and
  3. condemns One Nation and the LNP for turning their backs on First Nations Queenslanders by continuing to seek ways to widen the gap in life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.'

If anyone needed any more evidence that Pauline Hanson's One Nation political party and the Liberal National Party are on a unity ticket they need look no further than the contribution of the member for Mirani. He is the member who proudly stood in this House and declared in his maiden speech that, as a South Sea islander, he 'stood ready to carry on his ancestors' legacy', a legacy, as he went on to say, that was underpinned by his acknowledgement of 'the ancient first people of Australia and their descendants of all tribes, who cared for and walked these lands for many thousands of years'. He then went on to say—

We as Australian South Sea islanders have always respected their people and their traditions.

Where is that respect today?

**Mr Andrew** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Mirani, you have just had an opportunity to make a contribution. It is now the member for Algester's turn.

**Mr ANDREW:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence. I have always stood by my people—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Do not argue the point. You take personal offence. Member, will you withdraw?

**Ms ENOCH:** I withdraw.

Last year this parliament passed the Path to Treaty Act 2023 with bipartisan support. In fact, all members of the opposition voted in favour of this legislation. This was a historical moment for Queensland. At the time the Leader of the Opposition acknowledged the importance of this moment, saying that he had hoped treaty would be a catalyst for materially improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in this state, a genuine opportunity, he added, for our state to improve the lives of Indigenous Australians. The member for Surfers Paradise, in his contribution, noted the significant role that treaty will play in assisting to close the gap in life outcomes saying—

Path to Treaty is an opportunity for all Queenslanders to come together and build a more inclusive, respectful and reconciled state.

He also said—

Closing the health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is a critical issue, and improving access to health services is an essential part of achieving this goal.

He went on to declare that—

Across the parliament, it is clear that we are all committed to closing the gap.

Those words quickly turned hollow when less than a year later the Leader of the Opposition and his LNP team capitulated to the far right of their party. The pressure from the extreme far right was demonstrable and what Queenslanders witnessed was an LNP whose word cannot be trusted; an LNP who, when it suits them, will happily jump into bed with the extreme views of the member for Mirani and One Nation. That is something we saw in the Ipswich West by-election when the LNP did a grubby preference deal with One Nation.

It is a fact that there is an unacceptable gap in life outcomes between First Nations peoples and non-Indigenous people in this country. A First Nations male born in Australia is expected to live 8.8 years less than his non-Indigenous counterpart and for females, it is 8.1 years less. Today I turned 56. Statistically, I have less than 10 years left. First Nations women and children are also, sadly, disproportionately impacted by family and domestic violence, something I have experienced personally. These experiences are not just statistics; they are the lived experiences of First Nations Queenslanders and, sadly, they are not unique to Queensland.

We need enduring, long-lasting agreements between government and First Nations peoples to tackle these challenges together—something that First Nation Queenslanders have been lobbying for over many decades, something that is at the core of treaty. That is why we remain committed to a Path to Treaty as legislated and to our commitment to reconciliation and to necessary action to close the gap.

In 2019 Queensland began its Path to Treaty when our government signed a statement of commitment to reframe the relationship with First Nations people, a commitment our government took to the 2020 election. Also in 2020 Queensland, along with all other jurisdictions, signed the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Since that time we have seen years of consultation, workshops and forums across the state via a number of stages led by the Interim Truth and Treaty Body, the Eminent Panel, the Treaty Advancement Committee and the Treaty Working Group. If the member for Mirani, in his supposed respect for First Nations people, is looking for a mandate, there it is.

The path that the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mirani and One Nation have chosen for First Nations people is the same path they have always chosen: one to widen the gap by cutting essential services, one that disregards the voice of First Nations peoples and one where the LNP and their word is worth absolutely nothing.