




Speech By
Ariana Doolan

MEMBER FOR PUMICESTONE

Record of Proceedings, 12 June 2025

EDUCATION, ARTS AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to take note

 **Miss DOOLAN** (Pumicestone—LNP) (3.10 pm): I rise to speak on report No. 3 of the Education, Arts and Communities Committee, detailing our visit to Hope Vale and Cooktown earlier this year, alongside the Family Responsibilities Commission. This was more than just a committee trip. For me, it was a powerful reminder of the strength that lies in community-led solutions and the importance of respect, trust and cultural understanding in delivering better outcomes.

We travelled north at the invitation of Commissioner Tammy Williams whose leadership of the FRC was not only principled but also deeply personal. I was struck by the compassion and clarity with which she and the local commissioners approach their work. One moment I will never forget happened during a conference at Hope Vale. As we sat in the room, we watched a young woman quietly nod while the local commissioner spoke to her. He did not speak at her; he spoke with her. It was firm, honest and wrapped in dignity. There was no lecturing, no judgement, just a conversation between equals who both wanted the same thing—a better life. Afterwards, we were told that the young woman had volunteered for income management. That is the kind of change you cannot write in policy. It cannot be forced, it has to be grown from within, and the FRC is doing just that.

Visiting one of the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy campuses—the Hope Vale campus—was another standout. The pride of the children in their classrooms was contagious. The way they were learning was different to what I have seen before. The students repeated their teacher and were able to learn effectively in a way that worked for them. It was beautiful and, as a former teacher assistant, it made me miss being in a classroom.

Hope Vale's story is one of resilience. From its forced relocation during World War II to the proud return of its people, this is a place that carries both history and hope in equal measure. But challenges remain: school attendance, youth justice, domestic violence and the availability of culturally appropriate services. The Elevated School Response strategy was impressive, but it is not sustainable without long-term resourcing. When a local commissioner is riding the school bus to keep kids safe and accountable, it tells you everything about the strength of the community and also about the gaps in the system.

As the member for Pumicestone, I know our electorates are vastly different in geography but not always in challenge. Disconnection, youth disengagement and intergenerational hardship look different in Beachmere or Caboolture, but their root causes are not dissimilar. What we can learn from Hope Vale is that the answers must come from the community, not be imposed upon them.

I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge the recent passing of Victor Gibson OAM, a founding local commissioner in Hope Vale. Mr Gibson was a pillar of strength, serving as deputy mayor and councillor, and dedicating his life to building up the community. His contributions were recognised in 2015 when he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his services in the community.

Mr Gibson's legacy is one of unwavering commitment to his people and his culture. His leadership and guidance have left a mark on Hope Vale and the FRC. I extend my deepest condolences to his wife, Commissioner Priscilla Gibson, and their family.

I want to thank Commissioner Williams, Deputy Commissioner Curtin, the local commissioners and every teacher, student and community member we met. To the children we met at the schools: thank you for reminding us why we do this work because every child, no matter their postcode, deserves to walk into a classroom where they feel safe, proud and seen. Let's ensure that the lessons we learned in Hope Vale do not stay just in Hope Vale. Let them shape how we advocate, legislate and govern every day for every Queenslanders.