




Speech By
Corrine McMillan

MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 12 June 2025

EDUCATION, ARTS AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to take note

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (3.06 pm): I rise today to speak on the report of the committee's recent visit to Hope Vale with the Family Responsibilities Commission. The EACC has parliamentary oversight of the Family Responsibilities Commission. The FRC plays a unique and valuable role in supporting five discrete communities in Far North Queensland—Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge. Through case management conferences led by a local commissioner, local families are supported through some of life's challenges. The commissioner's duty is to protect and support vulnerable people, including children. It is a wonderful model of leadership development, ensuring leadership density across some of our most at-risk communities.

I acknowledge the work of the FRC commissioner, Tammy Williams, and the deputy commissioner, Rod Curtin, as well as the entire FRC team. The FRC's commitment to these five discrete communities is inspirational. Commissioner Williams is truly a transformative leader and a person of immense vision and integrity. Like her beautiful mother Aunty Lesley Williams—who for nearly six years guided my principalship at Glenala State High School—Tammy is a formidable and driven First Nations woman who will make her mark on modern Queensland. I am honoured to know and work with Commissioner Williams and feel adoration for all that she has achieved for her people to date.

Hope Vale is a proud Indigenous community north of Cairns, home to about 1,500 residents. The Thubi Warra people are the traditional owners of this land. I acknowledge and congratulate the local Hope Vale commissioners: Cheryl Florence Cannon, a fellow retired principal colleague who continues to contribute immensely to her community during her semiretirement; Erica Deeral, the granddaughter of another great First Nations leader Eric Deeral, who would be immensely proud of her commitment to the young people in Hope Vale; Priscilla Gibson; Robert Gibson; Doreen Hart; Selina Kerr-Bowen; and Kathryn Dora Gibson.

The visit assisted the committee to better understand the work of the FRC and to witness case management in action and see how the process supports the community more broadly. The committee visited the Hope Vale O-Hub, the Wellbeing Centre and the Hope Vale and Cooktown state schools and engaged with the Cape York Institute. This was a valuable chance to better understand how the Cape York Institute supports children's learning and encourages the aspirations of young local people. Precise teaching strategies unique to ESL learners and school staff who truly understand factors affecting learning in remote Queensland are nurtured by the Cape York Institute. I acknowledge former director-general Julie Grantham and Noel Pearson for their leadership of the Cape York Institute.

I acknowledge the hard work also of the former Labor government in securing important resources for these five communities. They include discounted prices of essential goods, the pathways for jobs program, billion-dollar funding boosts for Far North Queensland health care and new social housing in Cape York through Homes for Queenslanders. We recognise there is still more to do. We support working together to listen to First Nations peoples and respect their cultural and community needs.

The FRC also highlighted the Premier's charter letter to the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. This letter commits to forming an economic security team to improve outcomes for Queenslanders. It is the responsibility of this minister and her economic security team to take substantial action in order to create long-lasting change for communities such as Hope Vale and supporting the FRC.

The Labor opposition, through the member for Algeester and the shadow minister, will continue to hold the government to account for improving the outcomes of not only the Hope Vale community but also every remote Aboriginal and First Nations community in Queensland. I commend the report to the House.