



Speech By  
**Natalie Marr**


**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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Record of Proceedings, 10 June 2025

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Townsville, India Fest**

 **Ms MARR** (Thuringowa—LNP) (9.21 pm): I rise to speak about a real celebration of culture, community and connection, one that has proudly created its home in the heart of Thuringowa. Over the past decade India Fest Townsville has grown into a vibrant and unmissable event in our region's calendar, something locals look forward to every year. Held at the much loved Riverway precinct, this festival not only brings Indian culture to life in a way that is colourful, warm and welcoming but brings people together from all walks of life across the Townsville region.

It was no surprise to see India Fest Townsville named Queensland's Best Event in the 2025 All the Best Awards. Voted by Queenslanders, this recognition reflects what many of us in Thuringowa and the north have long known: that India Fest is a stand-out cultural celebration not just regionally but statewide. The people have spoken. This kind of recognition matters because it tells everyone that regional Queensland and indeed Townsville have so much to offer and our community knows how to come together to celebrate culture in ways that are inclusive, lively and authentic. It is also a reminder that we have incredible local venues like Riverway right here in our backyard and we should be putting them to good use more often. These events do not just bring people together; they build local pride and strengthen the bonds between us. Riverway is the perfect setting for this event. To see it transformed into a hub of colour, sound, food and dance each August is something truly special. For the people of Thuringowa it is a real pride.

The slashing of funding by the Townsville City Council for vital community events like India Fest is an unacceptable blow to our city's cultural heart and soul. These free events are the lifeblood of our diverse community, fostering inclusivity, understanding and unity for all residents regardless of their background. India Fest, now a state recognised celebration and Queensland's Best Event in 2025, provides a critical platform for children and families to engage with rich cultural traditions, creating memories and connections that last a lifetime.

To gut its budget with little notice is not only short-sighted but a betrayal of the volunteers, businesses and community members who pour their hearts into making this event a success. We cannot allow these cuts to dim the vibrancy of our city's identity or hinder the opportunities for cultural exchange. I am committed to fighting for India Fest's future and ensuring it remains a thriving, accessible event for all of Townsville. The council's last-minute announcement has left a devastating gap in the budget, threatening the festival's ability to maintain free entry and deliver the world-class experience our community deserves. As a proud supporter of this event, I will rally on local community leaders to secure alternative sponsorship and advocate fiercely to restore funding.