

**THOMAS MAYOR**

*Statement*

**HON KYLE MCGINN (Mining and Pastoral)** [5.36 pm]: I rise tonight to talk about a great event that took place this week. It is along the same vein as what Hon Robin Scott talked about, but I do not agree with everything that he said.

On Tuesday night, I held an event here at Parliament House to which all members of Parliament were invited. It would have been good to see Hon Robin Scott there. The event was about a young man who has been travelling around Australia with the Uluru Statement from the Heart. His name is Thomas Mayor. Thomas was at Uluru when more than 250 Indigenous representatives from all around Australia gathered to talk about the next step forward for Aboriginal people in Australia. It was quite amazing to hear him speak. Many MPs were there to listen. He has written a book titled *Finding the Heart of the Nation*. Thomas explained how he had been getting stories from different Aboriginal groups while he has been going around Australia with the Uluru Statement from the Heart and he has put those stories into the book. It was heartbreaking to hear Thomas refer to all the work that was done by the First Nation people to get to Uluru, put their ideas and thoughts together and come up with a statement. We just have to look at this place to see how hard it is for us to agree on things, let alone 250 different delegates. The statement is asking for constitutional recognition. It is asking for a voice. I genuinely believe that Aboriginal people want a voice because they have asked for it. The federal government immediately rejected that with a flat-out no. Since its re-election, it has been very flippy-floppy on where it stands. Ken Wyatt, the minister, sometimes says, “Yes, we’re ready for a referendum” and at other times he says, “No, we’re not ready.” It is a little bit confusing which way the government will go. It is one of those situations in which Aboriginal people need to have a body that represents them on issues that affect them. They need to have a voice within government and within the Constitution. I think it would go a long way towards giving them a voice at the table for the issues that the member was talking about. Particularly in the health space and all the other debates that happen within the community, if there was a voice for Aboriginal people to go through —

**Hon Robin Scott:** Who would you suggest the voice would be?

**Hon KYLE MCGINN:** That is the point! The point is that they decide. It is not about saying, “Oh, it’s politicians who are making the decisions.” It is about giving them the opportunity to have their own voice and the ability in the Constitution to make decisions on their future. That is what I think is most inspiring about it. They have not just gone and said, “Oh, okay, here’s a statement.” They have been going around Australia and consulting, talking and sharing stories about where they are heading. Thomas had such an inspirational view in that they are not going to give up this fight. They are not going to give up until they are heard. A referendum happened for them to be counted; now a referendum needs to happen for them to be heard. That is the reality of where we are at. Thomas’s book has just been launched and I strongly recommend that members have a look at it. If members cannot find it, please contact me and I will point them in the right direction. He will also be at a writers’ festival on Sunday at the University of Western Australia to talk about his book and his experiences. I have known Thomas for many years, and after hearing him talk on Tuesday night, I left feeling absolutely inspired by where he is heading. Since coming into this place, I have strongly said that I support the Makarrata and I support the voice, and I stand by that. I think it is a great opportunity for Indigenous people to get the seat at the table that they deserve, and it will be great for them moving into the future.