



Speech by

Mr BRUCE LAMING

MEMBER FOR MOOLOOLAH

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YOUTH SUICIDE

Mr LAMING (Mooloolah—LP) (12.25 p.m.): When we reflect on the fact that in 1995 in Queensland 396 males died by suicide compared with 317 deaths due to motor vehicle accidents, that brings to mind the seriousness of suicide, particularly youth suicide. I am advised that over the past 30 years the suicide rates for young people have increased threefold, rising from six deaths in 1964 to 18 deaths per 100,000 people in the nineties. That is a trebling in the number of suicide deaths.

I was appalled when I was advised that Queensland's youth suicide rate is 20% higher than the national average and that last year in Queensland the rate for males aged 15 to 24 years was a staggering 28.8 deaths per 100,000 and for females 5.7 deaths per 100,000. Equally sobering is the estimate that suicide attempts are potentially 50 to 80 times the rate of actual deaths by suicide. Fortunately, a number of organisations and individuals are addressing the problem.

Earlier this month I had the opportunity to attend the launch of the video presentation package of *Sludge Crossing* prepared by Youth Action, which is based at Mooloolaba on the Sunshine Coast. This package was developed with the aim of being used in classroom settings as a health promotion tool. I believe there is a need to make the school curriculum more inclusive of activities that enhance protective factors and foster a positive image for our youth. Activities and programs such as the *Sludge Crossing* video education package contribute to that.

Sludge Crossing is recommended viewing for all members of the House. The characters of Ruthey, Smiley and Stench are very graphically portrayed by local actors. The video addresses three key strategies: valuing young people in their diversity, promoting the seeking of help, and promoting mental health. I have purchased and provided to the Parliamentary Library a copy of this package. I recommend that members take the opportunity this week to view it and to recommend it to relevant organisations and schools in their electorates.

I particularly call on the Ministers for Health, Education and Families to give consideration to using *Sludge Crossing* as an education tool within their departments. I take this opportunity to compliment Matt Lupi of Youth Action, Mooloolaba, for his work in the area of suicide prevention, and Jean-Claude Boulenaz, who will also be addressing the problem of youth suicide in both Gympie and the Sunshine Coast health district.
