



Speech by

**MIKE REYNOLDS**

**MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE**

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Hansard 19 August 1999

**SCHIZOPHRENIA FELLOWSHIP OF NORTH QUEENSLAND**

**Mr REYNOLDS** (Townsville—ALP) (7.22 p.m.): Tonight I call on the Federal Government to play its part in the funding crisis affecting the Schizophrenia Fellowship of North Queensland's long-term community housing scheme. The Federal Government is now making no contribution to this or other important aspects of the fellowship's activities.

I am very much aware of the need to ensure the continuation of the sterling work done by that organisation and cannot accept that its operations should be curtailed through what amounts to a \$120,000 shortfall. The State Government has been particularly generous in its funding, providing a recurrent biennial grant of \$217,000 in addition to allocating an extra \$540,000 for long-term community housing in the last 12 months. That \$217,000, which goes towards salaries and administration, represents a substantial 17% increase on previous funding under the Borbidge regime, which clearly did not place the same priority on mental health as does the current Beattie Government.

But despite the Queensland Health Department's substantially increased funding, additional funding for salaries, furnishing and refurbishing related to long-term housing and running costs of other projects is required. We believe that our Government has more than generously contributed to the Schizophrenia Fellowship's needs. This is a combined State and Federal responsibility, and I would strongly urge the Commonwealth Government to help meet the \$120,000 shortfall, which will allow the fellowship's three major projects, that is, the long-term community housing project, the 1800 help line—which is particularly important for remote and rural residents—and the Help for Rural Caregivers Program to continue. The basic structure of all programs has remained in place. Only the means of making them work is lacking.

I acknowledge the Commonwealth Government's contribution in setting up a Queensland 1800 help line pilot in 1998, but I express concern that ongoing funding has now been denied. Regrettably, this lack of continued Federal funding has resulted in the hotline being cancelled. I call on the Commonwealth Health Department to urgently review the situation and help resolve the fellowship's significant operational difficulties. The Schizophrenia Fellowship has done an excellent job for north Queensland.

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