



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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MENTAL ILLNESS

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (9.27 p.m.): Winston Churchill said that the empires of the future would be the empires of the mind. We often thought that his statements were profound. It was likely that he was referring to the challenges of philosophies and how they formed people's thoughts in nations. I think it is truly proven prophetic when we consider that mental illness has had such an impact on communities.

Suicide has had such a terrible toll upon our communities. The issue of mental illness and depression comes into greater highlight. Today in the Western World mental illness is one of the greatest challenges our communities are facing in the health arena. When we look at our economic prosperity relative to Third World countries, it is startling that the Western World is finding that the issue that it is most challenged by is this.

I state my support for the Standby Suicide Group which has done outstanding work on the Sunshine Coast. Its particular focus is recognising that there is a very real need for preventative work, particularly with families that have already been touched by suicide. Statistically we know that those who have had a suicide in the family are at greater risk of suicide themselves. Those family members or friends who have known that person are at a far heightened risk of being susceptible to considering this most final and terrible way out of their problems in their lives.

When we have a group that has such a network that is aimed particularly at breaking that terrible cycle, it is worthy of support of all levels of government. I would ask that this state government work to see the funding reinstigated for the Standby Suicide Group, because it has done outstanding work. It has been successful, and it is something that we cannot take too lightly. While it is a very difficult issue to ever have a perfect solution to, we know that the secret agony that people live with when it comes to mental illness and depression, particularly when it comes to those who consider suicide, means that we must strive as a society to find better ways to try to prevent that and better ways to break the cycle with the impact upon families. It is a cycle that has been proven to be so deadly as other people tend to follow the path of those in their family who have taken that option.