




Speech By
Jennifer Howard

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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ADJOURNMENT

Floresco Centre

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (10.21 pm): I rise to speak tonight about the great work undertaken in my electorate of Ipswich by the Floresco Centre, which is a facility that provides a safe environment for people who experience mental illness and their families and carers. Floresco is an Italian word meaning 'beginning to bloom'. This name was chosen specifically to highlight that the centre is about empowerment and support. It is about helping people with a mental illness realise their full potential. The Floresco Centre helps people to learn how to deal with life's challenges through group support, mutual support and self-help, personalised support and family and carer support. Floresco is led by Aftercare and operates within a consortium model. Agencies share expertise and knowledge to provide positive, locally based outcomes to benefit individuals and their families.

What makes Floresco so special is that it enables ease of access to a diverse range of services in one location. This safe, one-stop model reduces the need for people to repeat their story to numerous stakeholders across different locations. It also helps reduce the duplication of services by providing a single access point for clients. It is this improved community access to mental health services that really goes a long way to avoiding hospital admissions, which are disruptive for consumers and costly for government.

I commend the organisations within the consortium: the Ipswich Regional Advocacy Service; Freedom, Social Justice and Growth; Life Without Barriers; Artius; Churches of Christ; MAX Employment; the West Moreton Hospital and Health Service; Drug ARM and the Mental Illness Fellowship of Queensland.

I particularly commend Ivan Frkovic, the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Floresco, whose life dream has been realised in this unique model. When you talk to Ivan, his passion for finding realistic, practical solutions for people living with mental illness shines through. He is a wonderful asset to my community and I am lucky to have him steering the Floresco community.

I also want to thank the Minister for Health, the Hon. Cameron Dick, who visited Floresco when he was in Ipswich a few weeks ago. We met not only the managers and staff but also clients of the Floresco Centre. The minister heard firsthand about the programs that Floresco is running. The minister was able to question clients and hear how these programs have helped change their lives.

This government is committed to effective mental health outcomes. For that reason, the Palaszczuk government supports Floresco's work, with annual funding of \$1.1 million a year. Floresco is already proving its worth in boosting the community mental health services available in Ipswich. I am proud to speak tonight about this wonderful service. I commend all who work for and with Floresco for their efforts.