




Speech By
Julianne Gilbert

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Regional Queensland, Mental Health

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (2.39 pm): Life is becoming increasingly fast. That can be quite exciting, but it could also make people anxious to the point of having anxiety and depression. Last Thursday was R U OK? Day. It is a day when we are reminded that we need to talk to people around us—in our schools, workplaces, communities and especially in our homes—and not just ask, 'How are you?' but ask, 'Are you okay?' and be prepared to listen to the answer. Conversations need to be had every day. We need to remind everybody to ask that question every day—'Are you okay?'

In Mackay, Grapevine, headspace, Run For MI Life and Tufminds joined with the Resource Industry Network to host an event at which Sonya Scoble, a very brave woman in Mackay, told of her own personal experience of losing her dear son, Aiden, just in July last year. Sonya highlighted the sad fact that our drive-in drive-out workers and our fly-in fly-out workers in our mining towns have a lot of pressure put on them because of their rosters. As a community, we need to be very aware of the risk of mental health issues.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to looking after the health of regional Queenslanders. That is why I am really pleased that the Mackay Hospital and Health Service is rolling out a project that includes workshops on mental health first aid for farmers and business operators who are affected by the drought. For the benefit of the member for Whitsunday, who tweeted that there is nothing for Collinsville or Clermont and that everything is going to the Mackay HHS, I point out to him that, if he stopped driving around and stayed home for a while, he would realise that the Mackay HHS covers Bowen out to the mining centres.

Mackay's purpose-built step-up step-down residential mental health facility has opened its doors. It has been open for a little while, but a couple of weeks ago we celebrated its opening. This \$6.1 million facility is great for the Mackay community. It is a 10-bed facility that helps people to step down from hospital, get back into life and the community. It allows those living in the community to step up and avoid another hospitalisation. This facility supports people who do not need inpatient care but need short-term supported accommodation in a home-like environment. This facility is fantastic. A brave young man spoke about his experience there. It changed him and he is turning his life around.