



Speech By  
**Ros Bates**


**MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA**

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## **PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

### **Mental Health Week**

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.36 pm): Mr Speaker, 5-13 October was Queensland Mental Health Week, highlighting the importance of talking about mental health and what Queenslanders can do to look after their own mental health. Self-awareness is as important as reaching out to those who need support. This year the theme was Take Time for Mental Health. Take time is about the simple yet proven things everyone can do to boost mental wellbeing. Take time is also about breaking down the stigma associated with mental illness and reaching out to people in our community who need support.

It is important that we talk about mental health and raise awareness of the need for positive mental health and wellbeing. More needs to be done to support those in our community who suffer from mental health issues. Statistics provided through the Queensland Mental Health Commission in their 2016 performance indicator report show that 18.7 per cent of Queenslanders aged 15 years and over—almost one in five—reported living with a mental health condition. That is higher than the national average. The LNP supports community mental health services to ensure that those who need help receive the support they need.

It is also something we need to keep front of mind, as two-thirds of our state is suffering through horrendous drought conditions. It is not just an issue in regional Queensland—it is something that families deal with right across the state. One of the issues that is always important to consider as part of mental health and wellbeing is the rate of suicide, which is something that is less spoken about. Data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics last month shows that in 2017 in Australia, 3,128 people died from intentional self-harm, an increase of 9.1 per cent from 2,866 in 2016. Deaths from intentional self-harm occur among males at a rate more than three times that of females. Intentional self-harm is the 10th ranked leading cause of death for males. All states except Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia recorded an increase in deaths due to intentional self-harm in 2017. Queensland reported the largest increase in suicide deaths: 804 in 2017 compared to 674 in 2016.

These are not statistics. Every one of these numbers is a separate human tragedy. In August, R U OK? Day highlighted issues around suicide prevention, as it does every year. R U OK? seeks to inspire and empower everyone to meaningfully connect with people around them and support anyone struggling with life in a world where we are all connected and are protected from suicide. Asking is not always easy but it could change a life. They provide four tips on how to ask: one, ask 'R U OK?'; two, listen with an open mind; three, encourage action; and, four, check in. If you or someone you know needs help now, call Lifeline on 131114. If someone is in immediate danger, call triple 0.