



Speech By  
**Brent Mickelberg**


**MEMBER FOR BUDERIM**

---

Record of Proceedings, 6 February 2020

**LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (3.21 pm): I have spoken in this place many times about the struggles that I and many veterans have experienced in relation to PTSD, depression and other mental health conditions. I spoke in my maiden speech in this place of the mental health challenges that exist for our defence and emergency services personnel and of the need to spread awareness. Such issues are a well acknowledged problem, but sadly as a society we still too often see our veterans, police and other emergency service workers take their own life.

I commend my fellow parliamentary colleagues who have shown the courage to stand up and talk about their own mental health battles. In particular I would like to recognise the brave contribution of my friend the member for Nicklin, Marty Hunt. It is human nature to try to shut out the memories of dark periods in our life. It takes courage to stand up here in the public eye and that is a testament to the member for Nicklin's character.

I often wrestle with how best to address mental health challenges across society as a whole. We know that things have improved. There is more community awareness of the issues, those affected are more inclined to seek help now than they ever have been and arguably employers are more understanding. Yet we still have so much room to improve. People are still taking their own life.

It is heartening to see the Queensland Audit Office taking an interest in the issue of managing the mental health of our Queensland Police Service personnel. The response from the Police Commissioner provides some comfort to me that there is a degree of attention on the issue of mental health for our police officers.

Arguably, the mental health challenges that many of our police face are even greater than those faced by our defence personnel. Our police live and work in the same community that they police. My own wife, Anna, served as a police officer in Cairns and on the Sunshine Coast. Many times at the end of a day I would know she was affected by the things that she had seen and then would have to go back out into the same community where she had witnessed those incidents during the day. We know from our fellow members' contributions that the job takes a toll on every single police officer.

The Queensland Police Service has much work to do to improve their support of officers and all employees who suffer from mental health challenges. The recommendations of the Queensland Audit Office report are a good start. I note that the Police Commissioner in his response indicated that the identified improvements will have been implemented by now. Much needs to be done and it is incumbent on all of us in this place to make sure that those improvements occur. I for one will be watching.