




Speech By
Brent Mickelberg

MEMBER FOR BUDERIM

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Mental Health, Thompson Institute

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (2.55 pm): Our community's understanding around the mental health challenges faced by many Queenslanders on a day-to-day basis has increased considerably in recent years; however, the topic of mental health—more particularly suicide—remains a difficult and uncomfortable topic for many. Despite the advances we as a community have made, it is very clear that much more needs to be done. Across Queensland we still hear heartbreaking stories of people taking their own life. On the Sunshine Coast, each week one person dies from suicide. That is higher than the national average. Given the fact that there would be very few Queenslanders who have not been personally touched by friends or family taking their own life, it comes as no surprise that for every person who dies by suicide another 100 people are affected.

In my community on the Sunshine Coast, a number of community groups and organisations have come together under the leadership of the Sunshine Coast Mind & Neuroscience—Thompson Institute to form the Alliance for Suicide Prevention. The alliance seeks to create an integrated network of connected community organisations with an aim to improve mental health and resiliency to suicide and its precursors. It is an important initiative that drives awareness, delivers training and provides important information for the entire community. Members of the alliance include local schools like Matthew Flinders Anglican College and Sunshine Coast Grammar, community groups like Bloomhill Cancer Care and STEPS, the Queensland Police Service, and local hospitals and businesses.

Recently I visited the Thompson Institute along with the member for Burnett in his capacity as the shadow minister for veterans. I thank Professor Jim Lagopoulos for showing us the world-leading neurological research and clinical outreach services that the Thompson Institute delivers. Everything that the Thompson Institute does is based on the best available scientific evidence. While located on the Sunshine Coast, the Thompson Institute is at the cutting edge of scientific research, punching well above its weight particularly when viewed in the light of the relative financial support it receives from government.

I have spoken before about the fact that the work of the Thompson Institute is far reaching and that all Queenslanders will benefit from the research, discoveries and treatment improvements it delivers. I have been disappointed by the current Labor government, because it has not sought to engage with or understand the work of the Thompson Institute, despite a number of requests both from me and from the Thompson Institute directly. To date, the Palaszczuk Labor government has not provided a single dollar of funding to support the work of the Thompson Institute.

It is incumbent upon all levels of government to step up to the mark and tackle the insidious challenges associated with mental health and suicide. I again ask the government to engage in good faith and provide meaningful support to assist the Thompson Institute to continue its work for all Queenslanders. I also call on the government to bring forward debate on the bill introduced yesterday

by Minister Grace to address the issue of workers compensation and the PTSD onus of proof. If the government is genuine about tackling this issue the bill will be debated before the election in October before it lapses.