




Speech By
Corrine McMillan

MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

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ADJOURNMENT

Mansfield Electorate, Ways to Wellness Program

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (7.15 pm): I am extremely grateful to the wonderful people who make up the Mansfield electorate and the broader Queensland community who have adhered to the strong and sometimes challenging health directives from the Chief Health Officer to keep us safe over the past 12 months. As we know, the past year has forced many individuals in and out of isolated lockdown periods that have greatly impacted people's mental health and wellbeing. I am proud to share that I have a crucial fully funded program in my community that is addressing this growing issue which is managed by CEO Deb Crompton and the Mount Gravatt Community Centre.

The Ways to Wellness program was established with seed funding of \$100,000 in 2019 by the Palaszczuk government. This program was initiated by myself in conjunction with the University of Queensland and the Queensland Community Alliance drawing on leading research from the United Kingdom and in response to an issue that I was hearing about when I spoke to my constituents at their doors, on the phone and at local shopping centres.

The aim of the project is to address and reduce social isolation in Mount Gravatt and surrounding areas by implementing a social prescribing model through the engagement of a link worker or social worker. Key milestones of the project include: over 200 participants have been referred to and received service from a link worker to date; connecting these individuals to over 50 different local groups and activities, key government and non-government services, agencies and community organisations for support; and providing essential services through the COVID-19 pandemic to effectively reach those most impacted by the pandemic and to bridge the gap where other services have closed.

I have responded to considerable interest in the Ways to Wellness program and the social prescribing model from across Australia, including Victoria Health, Mount Barker Community Centre in Adelaide, Queensland Health and the Princess Alexander Persistent Pain Clinic. The University of Queensland has monitored the journey of this program through an ARC research grant in partnership with the Mount Gravatt Community Centre and the Mount Gravatt Men's Shed to research the impact and outcomes of the Ways to Wellness project until September 2022. This program provides an evidence based model for successful social prescribing that can be applied in other communities within Queensland and across this nation.

I am proud of the cutting-edge leadership of our government on this important health issue and I thank my close colleagues from the University of Queensland, especially Associate Professor Genevieve Dingle for her ongoing commitment to evaluating this project.