




Speech By
Jennifer Howard

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

Record of Proceedings, 28 October 2021

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Mental Health Week

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (3.24 pm): Having celebrated Mental Health Week earlier this month, it is important we acknowledge the great work our local mental health services are doing to support vulnerable people in the Ipswich community. On 17 October, I attended Neami National's Wellbeing Fair at their Living and Learning Centre in my electorate. The wellbeing fair provided an opportunity for local people to take time out to consider their mental health and wellbeing. Neami National believes that community based support helps people to flourish and build meaningful lives. I commend Neami National's commitment to our local community and the good work they are doing to help people improve their wellbeing.

Other community mental health services in Ipswich like Stride Hub, Headspace and Open Minds are also doing a great job connecting people with counselling and social services and giving them skills to live independent and fulfilling lives. The Palaszczuk government is a great supporter of community mental health services because we know that they make a difference to people's lives and to our communities. Late last year our government delivered just over \$418,000 over a two-year period to Stride's early and emotional wellbeing service. I know that the Stride Kids hub does a fantastic job in Ipswich, helping children up to 11 years of age experiencing mental health concerns. It is never too early to help kids struggling with mental health issues. Services like Stride provide specialist support to these kids so they can improve their wellbeing and grow up to be happier and healthier adults.

The Palaszczuk government understands that more Queenslanders are needing specialist mental health support and are turning to our public hospital system in time of acute distress. At Ipswich Hospital, for instance, just over a thousand people were admitted during 2019-20 for mental health related episodes. To respond to this demand our government is delivering a new \$91 million, 50-bed acute mental health unit at Ipswich Hospital and an \$11 million expansion for Ipswich Hospital's emergency department, which will include a new dedicated mental health area. For those struggling with addiction, we are delivering a new \$24½ million alcohol and other drug withdrawal management and rehabilitation service for the Ipswich region.

Supporting our community's mental health requires an holistic response, with our public hospital and health service working together with community based services like Neami National and Stride so we can help people live healthier and more fulfilling lives.

I would like to thank all of the Ipswich people who have made an effort to get their COVID-19 vaccinations. This week the Ipswich LGA hit a double-dose rate of 57 per cent and a first-dose rate of 73 per cent, but that still leaves 27 per cent of the Ipswich population 15 years and over, or 45,685 people, who have not had a single dose of the vaccine yet. To those people I say: you have three days to get your first dose so you can be ready for when Queensland opens its borders on 17 December. Please, do not hesitate or wait any longer. Get vaccinated today!