




Speech By
Amanda Camm

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

Record of Proceedings, 14 October 2022

MENTAL HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (3.37 pm): It was an absolute privilege to be able participate, listen and travel the state as part of the Mental Health Select Committee. I would like to thank—in what was a very bipartisan committee—the members for Greenslopes and Southport who worked very well together as our chair and deputy chair, all members of the committee from both sides of the House and the crossbench and also the secretariat and Hansard, because the content of what we heard throughout that committee's entire travels in some of its hearings was quite significant, quite emotionally tolling and taxing. I just thank everyone for their efforts because it was a very important issue that needed to be brought to the fore.

Across our state, almost one in two Queenslanders experience a mental illness in their life time. Certainly, my family has had firsthand experience. I share this because it is important not just in this House but in our communities that we do share lived experience. I acknowledge the member for Macalister for the very eloquent way in which she has shared the insights into her lived experience.

For me and my family, my father took his own life 13 years ago next February. That had a significant ripple effect across my family and my community. To this day, a number of my family members will probably never get over the loss of him. We have lived experience.

It was a privilege to be able to sit on that committee and listen to and connect with other Queenslanders like Damien Martoo from Kingaroy who shared the loss of his son to suicide. He spoke of what he and his community are proactively doing through their chamber of commerce. I know that the member for Nanango was very keen to speak to this committee report because when the inquiry was announced she came forward and said, 'You need to come to my community. Nanango has one of the worst suicide rates in Queensland.' It was important that we took the opportunity to listen. Damien Martoo shared lived experience of interacting with state agencies, whether it be the Coroner's office or health services. He spoke of the need for trauma informed approaches. The committee heard that loud and clear and that was one of our recommendations. One of our other recommendations was to ensure that a peer supported workforce is something the government considers. I was pleased to hear the minister's commitment to funding mental health services.

It was shown in the Queensland Health report that we were one of the worst states when it comes to the funding of mental health services in the last decade. When one looks at the Queensland Health data around the workforce in my community of the Whitsundays and further afield in North, Far North and remote Queensland we find that there is significant underinvestment in workforce attraction and retention and investment is needed.

That is also going to need the support of the federal government. I was the first to call out during the committee hearings where the former federal government was failing regional and rural Queensland. When one travels beyond Noosa one cannot access psychology services, telehealth services, services for teenagers with eating disorders, psychiatric services for young children or

paediatric psychiatric services. In my community I have headspace that operates only two days a week and that is not good enough. Through the discussions we had as a committee we made recommendations on those things. The issues were so significant that I think we could have filled another couple of committee reports.

I also recognise the impact that alcohol and other drugs is having across our communities. There are a lack of services and facilities and there is a need for co-investment to expand those services, particularly in regional, rural and remote Queensland. As pointed out in the statement of reservation, whilst philosophically I disagree with the funding model that the government has brought forward, I agree that mental health needs to be a priority of both sides of this House. We need to do everything we can to connect people and ensure their wellbeing is maintained. The suicide rate across the state is far too high.