



Speech By  
**Barry O'Rourke**


**MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 October 2022

## **MENTAL HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE**

### **Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (3.42 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Mental Health Select Committee's report and its recommendations. The inquiry considered the opportunities to improve mental health outcomes for all Queenslanders, no matter where they live.

The committee received 164 written submissions and undertook an extensive consultation process. We held four private hearings and 15 public hearings in Brisbane and across Queensland to hear from submitters, stakeholder groups, people with lived experience and members of the public. The committee heard evidence from 243 witnesses. We also conducted 11 site visits across Queensland from the Gold Coast to Cairns, and we had the opportunity to visit the Aboriginal community of Yarrabah. I acknowledge those who provided their statements and submissions, particularly those with lived mental health experience, alcohol and other drug issues and those who have experienced suicidality issues. It is rare to find anyone who has not been impacted in some way by these issues.

The committee heard numerous stories of the difficulties that people were experiencing in accessing mental health services and support. One of the biggest issues that I noted was the lack of youth mental health and eating disorder services in regional and remote Queensland. Recommendations 5 and 32 go to this point as well as being covered in other recommendations. There were a total of 57 recommendations.

One of our site visits was to Stepping Stone at Stones Corner. This is a great community organisation supporting people with lived experience. We heard from one young lady who had found out about Stepping Stone Clubhouse when she was 18 and not long after she had been diagnosed. She had experienced a lot of mental health issues and it had been quite a long journey and very much a struggle. She found it very hard to come to the clubhouse at first because she was so unwell, but gladly this increased. She found meaningfulness, purpose, a place of belonging and acceptance. She became more social, made more connections and got involved in work. She has obtained employment which has helped her routine, structure and confidence. This is something that she did not think she would ever achieve.

Her comments really spoke of the importance of having supportive and welcoming community-based organisations that are developed in conjunction with the input of those with lived experience to ensure that the organisation is truly client focused. I hope we will see similar models in other locations. In Rockhampton and Central Queensland I would love to see something in that space. There are quite a lot of mental health services, but nothing as good as I saw at Stepping Stone, which is an amazing organisation.

I thank the secretariat and staff for the great work they did in compiling this report. I thank my fellow committee members, and particularly the member for Greenslopes for his leadership in this area. As a group we have varied skills which complemented each other and we produced a great report, I believe. I commend the report to the House.