




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

Record of Proceedings, 24 June 2022

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mental Health Services, Reforms

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.46 am): The record sustainable investment in mental health announced in the 2022 state budget will make a positive difference to the lives of untold Queenslanders. Almost one in two Queenslanders will experience a mental illness in their lifetime. In any year in Queensland, approximately 20 per cent of adults and 14 per cent of children and young people experience a mental illness.

The impacts of mental health issues affect not just individuals but their families, friends and carers. That is why our government has acted to create a sustainable, ongoing source of funding to enable us to address the challenge of mental illness across the state. Our mental health levy will fund our commitment of an additional \$1.6 billion over five years, and \$28 million in capital funding, to address the key issues that surround mental health, addiction, substance abuse and suicide.

To address the recommendations of the parliamentary inquiry into mental health issues, these measures will cast a wide net—rehabilitation care, additional community care units and adolescent day programs. Importantly, we will invest in step-up step-down services. These services help people through what can be a difficult journey leaving hospital. They can do even more, helping some people stay out of hospital in the first place.

To do anything less than introduce a reliable and sustainable source of funding through a dedicated mental health levy would be to fail to treat the issue of mental health with the high priority it deserves. While the toll of mental health is high, so are the benefits from doing more to address it. Based on data from the Productivity Commission, mental illness costs the Queensland economy around \$40 billion each year. Respected economist Professor Allan Fels says a 25 per cent improvement in mental health would increase GDP by around 2.5 per cent. Today, that would represent around \$52 billion in additional output in Queensland.

The link between the health of Queenslanders and the health of our economy became clear during COVID-19, but it has always been there. For those in our state like the LNP who oppose the levy and oppose this reform and our vision for improved mental health care in this state, I have a message: talk to the Queenslanders—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr DICK: I say to the member for Kawana and others: talk to the Queenslanders living with the challenge of mental health and their families. Talk to them today and ask how much this means to them, because this budget and our government are committed to improving the lives and livelihoods of Queenslanders, no matter where they live.