




Speech By
Cynthia Lui

MEMBER FOR COOK

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ADJOURNMENT

Cook Electorate, Mental Health

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (7.31 pm): Recently I had the opportunity to visit the Coen community in Cape York with the Treasurer and ministerial champion, the Hon. Cameron Dick. Coen is a small and remote community and is part of the Cook Shire Council. It is situated in central Cape York, in Far North Queensland, 580 kilometres north of Cairns. During our visit to the community, mental health was one topic that kept coming up in discussions, which has prompted me to give a speech to highlight the issue for my communities.

I want to talk about mental health in the context of remoteness. While mental health affects any one at any one time, the issue in relation to communities in areas such as Cape York and the Torres Strait, in my electorate, is further exacerbated by remoteness. The geographical location of those communities means that they are quite isolated. Often times, access to family, friends or specialist mental health services is poor because the very technology we enjoy here in Brisbane does not exist in a Cape York black spot. Everyday things such as picking up the phone, video calling someone or checking your Facebook page, which keep us all connected, becomes limited or sometimes non-existent in parts of my electorate.

While it is important for people living in those parts to feel connected, it is more important that we as individuals and as a collective continue to elevate conversations about mental health with one another to break the stigma that keeps mental health hidden away. We need to talk about mental health and the impact it has on individuals and families so that we can continue to keep the issue relevant in our homes, in our work places and in our communities.

I met a lady by the name of Jackie. Although I have not asked for permission to use her full name and story in my speech, I want to thank Jackie for sharing her story with the Treasurer and me in Coen. Jackie shared her very tragic and personal story of a family impacted by mental health to raise awareness for mental health in Cape York. Jackie started the initiative, 'Talk about it Tuesday'. Every Tuesday, the community is decked out in bright colourful shirts with the aim of getting people to talk about mental health in order to keep the conversation going.

Before I conclude, I want to thank the Treasurer and Premier for their support on the issue of mental health and for the large investment in this budget to address mental health going forward. I am extremely pleased and proud to represent this government, as this is an issue that affects all Queenslanders and it needs the best attention that we can give it. I am extremely pleased for my community that we will be able to benefit from this announcement.