



Speech By  
**Jessica Pugh**


**MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 October 2022

**MENTAL HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (3.32 pm): This Mental Health Week I am very proud to rise to speak on the Mental Health Select Committee report. I state at the outset that I am in awe of the committee for endeavouring to undertake such a Herculean and wideranging bipartisan review. I congratulate all of the committee members for their work and certainly the chair. I was lucky enough to sit in as a substitute on the committee for just a day, which is why I wanted to speak today.

I also pay special tribute to our colleague, the member for Macalister, who in addition to being on this committee has also been so beautifully open about her own mental health journey. She makes such a contribution in this place. I find her to be a real inspiration. Everybody here would rightly say that we are so proud to call her a friend. I also acknowledge—I am not going to say ‘the bravery’—our colleague the member for Southern Downs for coming forward last year and staking his claim in saying that he needed to take time off. I know that every single member of the House at that time wished him well. It is really wonderful that we can do that. It was that bipartisan spirit that was brought by the committee to this report. It is one heck of a read.

How can any of us possibly hope to canvas the myriad topics covered in this report in just five minutes? Of course, none of us can. I just wanted to cover off briefly on a few areas that I identify with in my family and my life experience. Thank you to the member for Pumicestone for also sharing her experience; it is really important.

On the day that I sat in as part of the committee, one of the witnesses spoke to the committee about people’s transition into aged care. Although from memory that committee hearing was about six months ago now, I still remember this piece of testimony really vividly. The evidence was that for many people and their families the transition to aged care is really quite traumatic. It is a huge life event that is also quite upsetting for those families. I do not know why exactly, but those words really hit me like a thunderbolt and have stayed with me ever since.

Around the time of this hearing my nan’s health took a serious turn for the worse. Just as we had heard in evidence, my father and his brother had to find aged care for my nan fairly quickly. Up until that time, nan and pop had been living in their home in Auckland, Pakuranga with daily visits from family. They were completely self-sufficient and had hoped to live out the rest of their days in their little three-bedroom, weatherboard, shingle home in Pakuranga in which they raised their children basically from infancy. It is pretty amazing that in such a short period of time my nan was having falls and my pop could no longer care for her. It was a huge upheaval not just to nan and pop who actually dealt with it quite well but to the entire family. I have always been a person who says that a home is where you live and your house is where you live until it no longer suits your needs and then you find the next place to live that also suits your needs.

The idea of going back to New Zealand and not pulling up in the driveway of No. 27 The Boulevard in Pakuranga is an absolute wrench to me and the whole family. I can see very clearly why it would be so hard for so many people to transition out of that family home that they have probably

lived in for their entire adult lives in a lot of cases and move into aged care. One lesson for us all from this work could be that we need to put some real thought into how we do that and how we prepare ourselves for what in many cases will be an inevitable life event as we age.

In the time left I just wanted to touch on the small business component. One thing which I did not find in my brief perusal but which I wanted to touch on was the impact of social media on small business owners. A lot of us think nothing of leaving a review but, from my experience and the experience that we had in our family business, those reviews really hit owners hard. I ask people to think twice and to be kind online.