




Speech By
Hon. Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 23 June 2022

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Emergency Services, Personnel

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (10.09 am): This is a week of record budgets—a record budget for the Police Service, a record budget for Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and a record budget for Queensland Corrective Services. Of course, the big-ticket item this week is the record budget for Queensland Health. I was excited yesterday to have two copies of the plan. Now I have three copies because it is such a big-ticket item and an important one. I may need a box tomorrow.

It was in no small way that the performance of our dedicated police and emergency services personnel kept Queenslanders safe, allowing our economy to flourish like no other state during the very difficult times of the ongoing COVID pandemic. Queensland often took the lead and was prepared to make the hard decisions, and the result was there for all to see in the budget delivered by the Treasurer this week. Our police have, in particular, greatly appreciated the Treasurer's announcement of significant and specific funding for mental health services.

Yesterday I mentioned that I was recently very honoured to launch the Mental Health Co-Responder permanently in Townsville last month. The Queensland Police Service and Queensland Health met and created a co-responder model before conducting an 18-month trial throughout 2019 and 2020 in Townsville. The service was made permanent this year following the successful trial. The Mental Health Co-responder consists of a mental health clinician and a police officer responding together to calls for service from people in crisis. In the Townsville district alone, more than 2,000 calls for service are received each year from vulnerable people experiencing a mental health crisis. The majority of those people would usually be taken to the hospital emergency department for a medical assessment. Police transport those people to hospital and remain with them until they are medically assessed.

Due to the success of that trial, police and Queensland Health have commenced a permanent service with a co-responder team working seven days a week, 365 days a year. Townsville is now the seventh police district to introduce a Mental Health Co-Responder model. We know from the success of the trial and since the permanent service has been in operation that there are many benefits. The person experiencing a mental health crisis can be assessed in their own home by an experienced health professional rather than being immediately diverted to the emergency room to wait for assessment.

When you deliver a record health budget and a record police budget you deliver record outcomes for Queenslanders—not just for Queenslanders though but specifically for our police and emergency services personnel, our front line, who on a daily basis deal with people in sick, vulnerable and disadvantaged situations. It is just another example of how the Palaszczuk government is supporting good jobs, better services and a great outcome—a great lifestyle for Queenslanders.