




Speech By
Rob Molhoek

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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MENTAL HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (3.07 pm): I would like to simply incorporate into my brief contribution everything the member for Greenslopes had to say and then add some. I, too, give my thanks to all members of the Mental Health Select Committee for their time and effort, for the dialogue and conversation and for the opportunities we had to share some incredibly unique and moving experiences as we travelled around the state. I add to the chair's thanks a special thanks to Dr Amanda Beem and the team for the incredibly hard work they did in compiling the report.

If there is one theme that came out for me it is simply the word 'support'. We met with so many different groups across the state. We met with individuals. We met people with lived experience who came and shared their stories and their traumas. The common theme we heard was of an overwhelming need for us all to dig a little deeper in terms of our humanity and find ways to look out for others and provide greater support to those in need in our community. It was a roller-coaster of an experience but such a rewarding and rich experience. It was such a privilege, as a member of parliament, to be exposed to so many incredible people.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge some special people down my way. I particularly thank Bernice Smith and all the team at Goldbridge Rehabilitation Services, who have been there for decades providing support for people with drug and alcohol related issues. Thanks also to Katy and to Michael and Corinne Barrett at Transformations on the Gold Coast and to Mal and Edith Kennedy, who have toiled for years in supporting people through an incredible service called Set Free Care.

We started the process with a visit to Stepping Stones Clubhouse in Coorparoo, a suggestion of the chair, Joe Kelly. It was an incredible experience. That service truly sums up the word support. It is a community of people who have been coming and going each day for a significant amount of time who find unconditional love and support in that environment and so much practical assistance.

Continuing that theme, the concept of support is an important one. We heard on a number of occasions from various organisations that appeared, and what we are seeing even now as Australia wrestles with the current housing crisis, that there is a need not only for housing but also for supportive housing. There is a need to accommodate people in environments or settings where they can well and truly become part of a community of support where there are services provided to them. A great example of that was the testimony we heard from the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union when they shared with us a little bit about the nurse-led service in South Brisbane that works with Micah Projects, Common Ground and a number of other services. They shared with us that for an investment of a few hundred thousand dollars a year they believe the service they were providing was saving some \$6½ million in diversions from mental health units, hospital beds, EDs, and in ambulance and police officer time. There are innovative approaches and I believe it is beholden on us, as we look through the recommendations of the report, not only to consider all the requests for more, but also to deeply consider some of those more innovative approaches that we see across the state.

I want to say thank you in particular to Mayor Ross Andrews in Yarrabah. We had an incredible experience at Yarrabah on the day we visited. A decade ago when I was the assistant minister for child safety I had the privilege of visiting a number of Indigenous communities. What I saw in Yarrabah was refreshing by comparison. I know there is still so much work to be done among First Nations people, but the team at Yarrabah in the health service and in their local council are a group of people who deeply care for their community. I do not think I have ever seen so many smiles and experienced so much warmth at a health service as I did in Yarrabah. I acknowledge and pay tribute to them.