




Speech By
Steve Minnikin

MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

Record of Proceedings, 17 August 2022

ADJOURNMENT

Price, Mr T

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (7.01 pm): I rise this evening to pay tribute to an inspiring young man from my electorate, Tom Price, whose powerful words have resonated with so many people from all walks of life in my local Chatsworth community. I am pleased to welcome Tom, who is in the public gallery this evening.

In 2021, Tom, then a year 11 student at Villanova College, successfully launched a youth mental health campaign in his school community. In September 2021, Tom came up with the idea to produce a video on youth mental health. Tom and fellow Villa seniors Riley Richards, the college captain; Cam Wallace, the vice captain; and Lachie Bremner worked together to script and produce a social media video featuring celebrities, community leaders and school students to raise awareness and promote a strong message, 'You are not alone'. Tom has told me that he reached out to celebrities mostly via social media and received overwhelming support. The video participants each read a line from the script and five different schools were involved in this process. The four-minute video highlighted issues faced by young people and has since been viewed thousands of times on YouTube.

'You are not alone' was established with an aim to change the statistics around youth mental health and suicide. Over 10 Brisbane high schools have now joined this project. Mental health is one of the leading problems facing young Australians today, particularly since COVID-19. Young people have experienced higher levels of stress and displacement compared to pre-pandemic levels. Statistics need to change. One in five are struggling with high or very high psychological distress, and only 13 per cent of those struggling actually speak up.

With widespread support, Tom and his team organised a 'You are not alone' fun run. The Story Bridge was lit up in yellow lights in the lead-up to this important event. On 25 June, the inaugural fun run was supported by over 2,500 participants, raising over \$37,000 for Lifeline Queensland and funded 955 life-saving phone calls. The Botanic Gardens was filled with people of all ages who had come together to talk, to mingle and to do as the motto implies, and that is to realise that you are indeed not alone.

Tom has updated me since the fun run advising that important initiatives will be developed from feedback received. A 12-month plan is underway to incorporate school based activities, along with two major community events. I quote Tom—

It is these events which will be designed to bring mental health out of the dark and into young people's lives to let the sunshine back in. Therefore, we feel an obligation to continue to be a voice. You don't know what storms young people are weathering.

These words in themselves speak volumes.