




Speech By
Cynthia Lui

MEMBER FOR COOK

Record of Proceedings, 12 October 2023

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Mental Health Week, Remote Communities

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (2.21 pm): This week is Queensland Mental Health Week. This year's theme is awareness, belonging and connection. I want to take the opportunity to speak to this important topic and bring light to some of the challenges that impact people's health and mental wellbeing in the most remote parts of Far North Queensland. According to the World Health Organization—

Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in.

I look after some of the most remote communities in the state. Living in remote communities comes with many challenges—challenges that deeply embed into people's lifestyle. When we talk about mental health in remote communities, it is important to also consider the environmental and social factors underpinning mental health.

Cost of living is a huge challenge for my communities. Issues affecting the mental health and wellbeing of people in communities ranges from housing to affordable transport, accessibility in and out of community, food and essential goods, jobs and many more. Many communities live and breathe their circumstances. Everything you have to rely on to survive day in and day out can become overwhelming, which can trigger feelings of isolation and loneliness. I am proud of the Palaszczuk government's investment into my electorate to help communities cope with some of the cost-of-living pressures. The Local Fare Scheme is giving people access to affordable travel. I can personally vouch for this because a few weeks ago I took a trip home to Yam Island to attend my grandmother's funeral. Due to flight availability, commercial and charter, the total cost of my trip was \$3,388 and something I cannot imagine for people living in my community—the reason why I will always fight hard for affordable travel for my community.

There is a \$64 million freight subsidy which, I am proud to say, we will be rolling out in early 2024. This means a 5.2 per cent subsidy into the pockets of consumers at cash registers in the Torres Strait, Cape York and the gulf region. Communities in my electorate are benefiting off the electricity rebate which the government is rolling out. I have had many conversations with constituents telling me what a difference it is making to their lifestyles. There is also the investment that is going into the PDR. We are seeing communities becoming more connected and it is really important for communities to keep connected so that people can stay in contact with family, access services and share their cultural traditions and lifestyle. I am proud of our Palaszczuk government investment into communities, I am proud that we are looking after people's mental health and wellbeing, and I am proud to represent the community of Cook.