




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Mental Health

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (9.54 am): We know that there are many Queenslanders who experience a mental health condition at some point in their life. Over the last five years, mental health, alcohol and other drug services across Queensland's hospital and health services have experienced an eight per cent increase in the number of referrals. Every single Queenslander deserves high-quality care close to home, and that includes mental health care.

In last year's budget we introduced a groundbreaking mental health levy to provide sustainable funding for mental health services which commenced in January this year. As a result, we are investing \$119 million from this levy into mental health initiatives. This includes \$21.7 million into mental health services for children, adolescents and young people, because we know that more young people are grappling with these issues. We have just heard from the Minister for Education about the wonderful services we are providing in our schools. We also know, coming out of COVID, how many young people are struggling.

Services for adults and older people are receiving \$19.3 million, while \$5.6 million will go towards delivering digital capability and digitally delivered treatment, care and support, making sure that those who live in regional and rural Queensland still get support. To ensure that there is support for those who need it most, \$17.3 million is being invested into responding to crisis situations and suicide prevention. As our government understands the difficulties that so many young families face, we are investing \$8.6 million into mental health services for new parents and infants. On top of this, \$11.8 million will go towards our hardworking alcohol and other drug services. All of this is critical, but we know there is always more to do if we are to address the impacts—often tragic—of mental ill health in our communities.

We are also looking at a range of strategies to support workforce recruitment, retention and sustainability including to support more First Nations mental health workers and more peer support workers. We are expanding our mental health co-responder model which pairs a senior mental health clinician with paramedic rollouts. We are also continuing to explore opportunities to expand mental health and police co-responder models so that vulnerable people experiencing a crisis can be treated in their own home, de-escalating issues before they become tragedies. All of this is only possible because of our government's mental health levy. It is delivering better health outcomes for some of the most vulnerable people across our state. I am so proud to be part of a government that is prioritising Queenslanders' mental health and wellbeing.