



Speech By

Donna Kirkland

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Rockhampton, Youth Foyer

 **Mrs KIRKLAND** (Rockhampton—LNP) (2.52 pm): Today I rise to speak about a matter of importance for my community and a matter of public interest: the plan to have a youth foyer in our region. We would love to have a youth foyer in Rockhampton. There is an urgent need. In the CQ area we have over 24,000 people and one-quarter of those live in Rockhampton. Many of them are facing housing instability and a lack of support to transition to living in our community.

In 2023, I attended a forum where we talked about homelessness. One of the key objectives mentioned was around youth foyers and, in particular, the one in Townsville. That caught my attention. Since then, I have pursued casually and now more formally the establishment of a youth foyer in Rockhampton. That vision was sparked in 2023 but it has been fuelled by an organisation called CQ Zero. I commend them and give them a shout-out because they have continued to lobby both myself and the state government about this.

A youth foyer provides safe and stable accommodation for youths aged between 16 and 25. To be part of a youth foyer, you have to be earning or learning. The foyer is staffed 24/7 by mentors who provide life skills training and help residents to transition into independent living. Successful foyers already exist at Logan, Townsville and on the Gold Coast. I mentioned Townsville earlier. Often our local youth are forced to move south, which means that they are unprepared and unsupported for living on their own. Many fall into hardship and are unable to secure housing or stay in school. In Rockhampton there are youths living rough in some of the drainpipes. They are eager to learn and are in training programs, but there is nowhere for them to stay. In Rockhampton we have over 31 crisis units but they are constantly full. Because of that, rather than a 12-week, stay people stay for six to 12 months. We need somewhere for those people to transition to.

A youth foyer is a solution for not only Rockhampton but also all of Central Queensland. It would offer up to two years of support. I am joined by my colleagues, the members for Keppel and Mirani. We call ourselves Team CQ. We are absolutely fighting hard to see that we get a youth foyer in our region. What better way to do that than to start a petition, which is what we have done. I encourage our community to get on board and sign that petition so that the youth in our region know that they matter.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McDonald): Members!

Mrs KIRKLAND: Unlike those opposite, we care about the youth in our region and we want them to know it. For 10 years we have been waiting. For over a decade the community has been calling out for a youth foyer. Our youths know that the LNP care, that they matter and that their dreams are worth backing. The LNP are doing that with the release of eight new foyers across the state. We have already announced Hervey Bay and Moreton Bay and five are yet to be determined. Cairns will also be the recipient of a youth foyer. I see that the member for Cairns is nodding. He is excited about that. It is great news. In closing, I encourage all opposition members to get on board and sign the petition for a youth foyer in Rockhampton.