



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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ADJOURNMENT

Mental Health

 **Mrs KIRKLAND** (Rockhampton—LNP) (9.02 pm): Year after year, the data surrounding mental health continues to grow not just in volume but in the heartbreaking truths that it reveals. From 1 January to 30 June this year the Queensland Mental Health Commission reported 355 suspected deaths by suicide in our state. On 5 August we lost a dear friend and cherished member of our family to suicide. Mark was a passionate advocate, known for his thoughtful submissions to parliament and local Rockhampton media. He stood firm in his values, always respectful and open to opposing views. Mark lived a full life, outwardly joyful and resilient through life's challenges. The shock of that day, the conversations that followed and the weight of his silent battle will remain etched in my heart forever.

As members of this community, we have the power and the responsibility to set a new standard—one where we intentionally reach out and treat others with care and foster connection. That is why I want to highlight the importance of the awareness events that have coloured our calendars in recent months. These are not just symbolic gestures; they are vital reminders of the support systems available to guide and heal those in need of light on their path.

As Assistant Minister for Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Treatment, I have had the privilege of attending numerous events that showcased the incredible work being done in the sector. Thank you to each and every one of you for contributing to this mission and for the great work that you do. From September through November we have honoured key milestones in mental health and suicide prevention—from World Suicide Prevention Day and Mental Health Week to World Mental Health Day and National Mental Health Month. As we move into November we embrace the Movember campaign, championing men's health with a focus on cancer, mental health, wellbeing and suicide prevention.

I refuse to let Mark's life be in vain or to accept the lowering of standards that contribute to the very crisis that we seek to heal. That is why I was proud to launch the Queensland Parliamentary Friends of Men's Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing last sitting week. Over 90 stakeholders and colleagues registered to join us at Parliament House for this powerful event. A heartfelt thank you to the Movember team and Health and Wellbeing Queensland for partnering with us.

I believe that uplifting men's health, especially their mental wellbeing, is not just important; it is transformative. When we support men in healing emotionally and mentally, we unlock the potential to mend countless social fractures in our communities. This is where true change begins. Prevention will always be the best cure and prevention begins with connection—to the right help, the right information and the right people. Each one of us can be a facilitator of that connection.