




Speech By
Margaret Nightingale

MEMBER FOR INALA

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ADJOURNMENT

Youth Mental Health Services

 **Mrs NIGHTINGALE** (Inala—ALP) (9.17 pm): I stand here today because I have seen what happens when governments fail our young people. When mental health services are dismantled lives are put at risk. Before entering this parliament I worked at the Barrett Adolescent Centre. I was there as it was winding down. I remember young people being told their safety, their treatment and their hope was gone, and staff, knowing the LNP's decision was reckless and rushed, trying to soften the blow. The LNP was warned: we warned them; families warned them; specialists warned them. They did not listen.

I remember holding a young person who knew they would not survive the closure and, tragically, holding the parents after they did not. The consequences were devastating. Families carry those losses every day. Staff still carry the weight. So do I. It was what brought me to this place and it continues to drive me. That tragedy taught us a hard lesson: when you dismantle mental health services, the consequences are real and lasting. That is why the decision to shut down the child and mental health clinic location at Yeronga concerns me so deeply.

We have heard the excuses—realignment, relocation and efficiencies—but we know what that means in practice. A service that was meant to be unified and accessible is being carved up and scattered across different sites. That is a step backwards and it places young people at risk of falling through the cracks. In youth mental health, predictability matters; a single point of access matters. Families in crisis should not be sent across town because redesign requires relocation. We have been down this road before and Queenslanders remember where it led.

Queenslanders learned from Barrett that you cannot trust the LNP with child and youth mental health. Many sitting on that side of the chamber were part of that government and part of that decision. This decision at Yeronga feels uncomfortably familiar: planning that shifts halfway through, promises that are scaled down and a community that is left confused. Where was the consultation with local families who rely on this clinic at Yeronga? This is exactly the pattern that occurred with the Barrett disaster. While the circumstances are different, the human risk is real.

When you close mental health clinics you do not just shut the door to a building; you shut the door to access and hope. We cannot repeat the mistakes of the Newman government. We cannot pretend that these decisions are harmless. We cannot push services into leased offices scattered across the city and call it equivalent to purpose-built hubs. As the member for Inala and someone who stood in the Barrett centre, I will not let this issue pass without challenge. I will speak out for the children, the young people and their parents who every day are fighting a battle against mental ill health. I require the government to do more. Instead of spending money on Adani, spend money on children's mental health.