



Speech By  
**Natalie Marr**


**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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Record of Proceedings, 26 August 2025

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Townsville, Youth Mental Health Support Services**

 **Ms MARR** (Thuringowa—LNP) (9.25 pm): Last week I stood with my community and my colleagues the members for Townsville and Mundingburra to launch a campaign that is deeply important and an urgent need in our region after a decade of inaction. Townsville is crying out for a dedicated youth mental health support service, and I will continue to advocate with determination for a positive outcome for our community. This community campaign is about giving our young people the support they need when they need it, right at home in North Queensland. Minister Tim Nicholls has already announced \$50 million to establish two new youth step-up step-down services in Queensland. One is confirmed for Rockhampton, but Townsville must be next. Our young people cannot be left behind.

In Thuringowa alone, almost 5,000 young people are aged between 16 and 21. Across the wider Townsville region, that number is over 19,000. That is a generation of young people who deserve access to mental health services close to home. Families in my community tell me the struggles they have had finding help and that they are desperate for options. With Labor in government for the last 10 years and not delivering, they often felt that, just because they lived in regional Queensland, the needs of their teenagers and young adults did not matter and they had no voice. That changed when they voted me in! I am proud to be their voice and to fight for what matters, and this matters.

The statistics agree with what I am hearing every day. Some 10 per cent of young people in my region are affected by ongoing mental health challenges. That is why we are fighting for a youth step-up step-down service in Townsville. This service would mean that young people at risk of crisis get 24/7 community-based support in a safe and stabilising environment. Consistently, families in our community share their thoughts and concerns on this issue with me, underscoring that this program would be a vital lifeline for them.

This service will provide a vital bridge for young people stepping down from acute hospital care or stepping up into more intensive community support to prevent hospital admission, giving them a safe, supportive place to transition back into the community. It ensures they continue to receive the care and guidance they need, reducing the risk of relapse and helping them regain confidence, independence and stability in their everyday lives.

I want to be clear: this is not just my fight; it is our community's fight. It is the fight of parents, carers, schools, health workers and young people themselves. Together we are standing up and saying loud and clear, 'Townsville is ready.' To the minister I say: the need in Townsville is urgent, the evidence is clear and the voices of our community are united, because at the heart of this campaign is a simple belief that every young person in Townsville deserves a chance to thrive. They deserve to feel safe, supported and hopeful about their future. We will not stop until Townsville has the mental health services it needs and deserves.

*(Time expired)*