

**R U OK? DAY — WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY
YOUNG MEN'S PROJECT WORKSHOP — ELLENBROOK**

Statement by Member for Swan Hills

MS J.J. SHAW (Swan Hills) [12.55 pm]: Today is national R U OK? Day and 10 September was World Suicide Prevention Day. Suicide is the leading cause of death in young men, killing more young people than cancer, car crashes, or workplace injury. Over the last five years, the north eastern corridor has had more than two young people hospitalised per week due to self-harm incidents. We also, unfortunately, have had multiple suicides in the Ellenbrook area. Suicides are devastating for families, friends and communities, and without good support networks and services often lead to more incidents of harm.

Last Saturday, I attended a Young Men's Project workshop in Ellenbrook with more than 30 local young men, ranging from school students to fly in, fly out workers and from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This project is an innovative way to tackle mental health issues. It brings young men together to talk about their mental health and the barriers they face in seeking help. The guys identify ways to tackle these barriers and vote for a project for implementation. This weekend's winning idea was the "blind chat", which aims to break down the shame that young men may feel when seeking help. It allows people to anonymously discuss their mental health with counsellors, in a format similar to a confessional. Projects like this directly empower young people.

I fought hard for youth suicide prevention and mental health services in Swan Hills, and the McGowan government has now provided \$140 000 in additional funding. This is the first time that a Young Men's Project workshop has been run by a local community group, and I would like to acknowledge the Ellenbrook Youth Service, especially Jimmy Cangy and Elise Jorgensen, and Youth Focus and headspace. They are doing great things for our community and I am proud to support their efforts.