

REPUBLIC OF NAURU

MENTALLY-DISORDERED PERSONS (AMENDMENT) No. 2 BILL 2017

SECOND READING SPEECH

Honourable Charmaine Scotty MP

24th January 2017

Mr. Speaker Sir,

I am pleased to present to the House today a Bill to amend the *Mentally Disordered Persons Act 1963*, an outdated legislation that does not cater to the modern understanding of mental health and does not address the increasingly significant mental health issues present in Nauru.

Mental health is not something that should be taken lightly. According to a World Health Organisation report one in four people in the world will be affected by mental or neurological disorders at some point in their lives. Around 450 million people currently suffer from such conditions, placing mental disorders among the leading causes of ill-health and disability worldwide.

The amendments proposed today include the creation of powers for authorised officers, the inclusion of more procedures designed to address mental health patients specifically, the power of review by a Magistrate, the rights of a person including the right to appeal detainment for assessment and other amendments relating to form for an inpatient treatment order.

Mr. Speaker and honourable members, these strengthened provisions will mean that people will receive the care, treatment and support which they need, improving their safety and that of others around them.

Once the designated mental health facilities are gazetted and further regulations created, we can all be assured that those suffering from any form of mental illness will be guaranteed added protection and care under this Act.

Mental illness should never be seen as a personal failure. In fact, if there is failure, it is to be found in the way we have responded to people with mental disorders. With the small changes we are making to our laws on mental health, this Government is making strategic decisions in order to bring about positive change in the acceptance and treatment of mental disorders.

Mr Speaker, the explanatory memorandum describes in detail each provision of the Bill.

I commend the Bill to the House.