




Speech by
Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

Hansard Tuesday, 13 November 2012

MOVEMBER

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (11.32 pm): It is the month formerly known as November—now known as Movember—and time to focus on men's health. Moustaches of all shapes, colours and sizes are sprouting on thousands of men's faces across Queensland, including mine, as we try to outdo each other in the mo department in the interests of raising money for the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, beyondblue and the Movember Foundation.

Mr Ruthenberg: Yours is beautiful, Curtis.

Mr PITT: I take that interjection. Movember is becoming more popular every year as a way to encourage at-risk males to address health issues such as prostate cancer and depression. Since its humble beginnings of 30 starters in Melbourne in 2003, more than 1.9 million people have come on board and have helped raise more than \$302 million worldwide. Last year, over 854,000 participants around the globe helped to raise \$123.7 million globally during the 2011 campaign—an increase of \$51.7 million over the prior year.

I know my mo will spark conversations and is already generating a few laughs. Only today, respected Channel 9 journalist Spencer Jolly showed little respect for my mo but suggested that I would not have been out of place featuring in the TV miniseries *Howzat! Kerry Packer's War*. And a mate of mine continued the cricket theme and said I look like I should be opening the bowling in the late 1980s and early 1990s for Australia. The other day I was at Cairns Airport on my way to Mount Isa for shadow cabinet and I was disappointed that we left from bay 12 and not from bay 13 because it would have made for a much better story!

We know that men are generally reluctant to talk about their physical and emotional issues. We need to change that, because the consequences of not seeking help can be deadly. Like most blokes, I do not enjoy going to the doctor and I have been guilty of saying, 'She'll be right,' plenty of times. But putting things off just makes the problem worse. One in nine men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime, and this year 20,000 new cases of the disease will be diagnosed. Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among Queensland men and the second greatest cause of male cancer deaths.

As the former minister for mental health, I am still very passionate about raising vital awareness and funds for men's mental health issues. Around 500,000 Queenslanders each year—one in five—will experience mental health issues and yet more than half will not seek help. Around one million Australian adults and 100,000 young people live with depression each year. One in eight men will experience depression in their lifetime. From where I sit, there is nothing tougher than acknowledging a problem and doing something about it. It may be too late to start growing a mo for this year for some, but it is certainly not too late to get a health check—because early diagnosis is the key to getting better outcomes for men in terms of both their physical and emotional wellbeing.

I congratulate all of my parliamentary colleagues who are also taking part in Movember. It is a great initiative because we are literally changing the face of men's health.