




Speech by

Seath Holswich

MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

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TYPE 2 DIABETES

 **Mr HOLSWICH** (Pine Rivers—LNP) (12.02 pm): Recently, over 12 weeks I had the opportunity to participate in the 612 ABC Brisbane Swap It challenge. The Swap It challenge is an initiative of Diabetes Queensland, the Heart Foundation, Cancer Council of Queensland and Nutrition Australia. It encourages people to trim their waistlines, not necessarily by rigorous exercise and fitness regimes but, rather, through swapping everyday activities for something a bit healthier. I undertook the challenge because I was acutely aware that my waistline measurements put me well into the overweight category and significantly increased my risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes. For men, a waistline over 94 centimetres puts them at increased risk and, for women, a waistline over 80 centimetres increases their risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Statistics show that a waistline over these measurements means that a person is three times more likely to develop diabetes. An inactive lifestyle also increases the risk, and then the older you get, the more at risk people become.

For those like myself who are at an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes, lifestyle changes to decrease their risk are relatively simple. Swapping large meal portions for smaller portions, resisting the sometimes overwhelming urge to eat seconds, getting off the bus one stop earlier and walking the extra distance and taking the stairs instead of the lift are all small steps that can easily be implemented into even the busiest life to decrease the risks. I took up a number of those swaps as well as others, and I am pleased to say that, at the end of the 12-week challenge, I had lost seven centimetres off my waist.

Honourable members: Well done!

Mr HOLSWICH: I was quite pleased. I have got a fair way to go, though, to be out of the high-risk category, but it is certainly a good start.

The reality of diabetes became even more real for me in the middle of the 12-week challenge when my then pregnant wife was diagnosed with gestational diabetes. Throughout her pregnancy she had to undertake the regimen of multiple daily injections of insulin, multiple daily blood tests and a complete overhaul of her diet and lifestyle. Whilst gestational diabetes generally goes away once the baby is born, it now means that my wife has up to a 50 per cent chance of developing type 2 diabetes in the 15 years after her pregnancy. It also means that our newborn son, Samuel, is at a significantly higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes during his lifetime.

Type 2 diabetes is a serious, but preventable, disease and once you have it, there is no cure. Whilst diabetes itself may be a manageable condition, if undiagnosed or poorly managed, it can also lead to other serious health problems such as heart disease, stroke, blindness or kidney failure. The statistics around type 2 diabetes are absolutely staggering. It is a preventable condition, however more people in Queensland die from diabetes and its complications each year than from breast cancer and prostate cancer combined. More than 300,000 Queenslanders have diabetes and it is estimated another 300,000 could have it and not be aware of it. Aborigines or Torres Strait Islanders are three times more likely to have type 2 diabetes than non-Indigenous Australians. Type 2 diabetes is also increasingly being diagnosed in children.

Diabetes Queensland estimates that the total cost of the disease in Queensland in 2008 was \$6.9 billion. This is obviously a significant drain on our health system and it is anticipated that this annual cost will continue to rise in coming years as type 2 diabetes becomes more prevalent in our community. A \$6.9 billion price tag for a preventable disease is something that needs to be addressed, and I applaud Diabetes Queensland for the Swap It campaign and for their efforts to raise awareness of the diabetes problem. Having now had the reality of this disease brought very close to home during my wife's pregnancy and realising the increased risks my family and I have of developing type 2 diabetes into the future, I have committed myself to continuing the habits I formed during the 12-week challenge and to spreading the message that this disease and its complications are preventable with early intervention. I would encourage everyone in this parliament and everyone in my electorate of Pine Rivers who fall into one of the high-risk categories to, firstly, assess their risk of developing type 2 diabetes by using the risk assessment tool on the Diabetes Queensland website, which is www.diabetesqld.org.au, and then to take action to reduce their risk of developing type 2 diabetes by watching their weight, eating healthy food and maintaining a physically active lifestyle. This disease, and its impacts on individuals' lives and our health system, is avoidable if we all take the appropriate steps.