




Speech By
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ADJOURNMENT

Lung Cancer Awareness Month

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (7.11 pm): I rise today to talk about Australia's biggest cancer killer. This year more than 12,000 Australians will be diagnosed with lung cancer. Even more alarmingly, more than 9,000 Australians will lose their lives to lung cancer in 2018. To put this figure into perspective, more Australians will die from lung cancer this year than from colorectal xx cancer, breast cancer and melanoma combined. Lung cancer also has a low five-year survival rate, with only 17 per cent still alive after being diagnosed. Lung cancer really is the forgotten cancer.

November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month, and it provides us with an opportunity to highlight the burden and challenges facing Queenslanders diagnosed with lung cancer. It also provides us as a community with an opportunity to help end the horrible and unfair stigma that has traditionally been associated with lung cancer—that is, if you are diagnosed with lung cancer you probably deserve it because you are or have been a smoker. To be crude, you smoked and you deserve to die. This stigma needs to end.

While it is acknowledged that smoking does significantly increase the likelihood of being diagnosed with lung cancer, around 20 per cent of people with lung cancer are lifelong nonsmokers. This is particularly true of women. It is estimated that three in 10 women diagnosed with lung cancer have never smoked. This goes to show that anyone can be diagnosed with lung cancer, not just those who smoke. If you have lungs, you can get it. You can develop lung cancer due to your genetics, if you have a history of lung disease or through exposure to air pollution or asbestos fibres.

I would like to acknowledge and commend Lung Foundation Australia, which is based in Brisbane, for its advocacy to support Australians with lung cancer and to eliminate the horrible stigma associated with this disease. Just last month Lung Foundation Australia released a wonderful report titled *Making lung cancer a fair fight: a blueprint for reform*. I commend this report to the House and encourage all members to read this document to ensure that they can fully appreciate the burden and challenges faced by Queenslanders living with lung cancer.

The report highlights that the economic burden associated with lung cancer in 2018 is \$292 million. It also notes that less than 12 per cent of people with lung cancer are diagnosed early, increasing the likelihood of death. But there is hope. New medical treatment such as a new wave of immuno-oncology medicines will allow many Australians with lung cancers to live longer lives. We need to do more to support those diagnosed with lung cancer, not demonise them or make them feel guilty about their condition. These Australians and Queenslanders and their families deserve our support, and they should know that they do not have to go through this alone.