



Speech By  
**Scott Stewart**


**MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE**

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## **MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

### **Project Red Socks**

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (2.20 pm): Early today a Project Red Socks kit was delivered to each member in the chamber, and here they are. If you do not have your set, come and see me.

**Mr McArdle:** They are good socks!

**Mr STEWART:** They are good socks! The kit contains a red socks badge, an information flyer and a pair of bright red socks. I am proud to say that these kits have been sponsored by the member for Caloundra and myself in recognition of Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. It is no coincidence that Prostate Cancer Awareness Month usually kicks off with Father's Day, and happy Father's Day to all dads for Sunday.

The kit is an initiative of the Rotary Club of Townsville Sunrise and is designed to serve as a reminder to all mature males to have an annual prostate check. It is not a fundraiser; it is merely an awareness program. Last year I distributed these kits in the chamber and we took a photo on the great staircase in this House. That photo and my speech were published in Rotary Australia's monthly magazine, and I received widespread support for the program. The photo also featured at the Rotary International conference in Canada, where the challenge went out to all Canadian politicians to show their support for prostate cancer awareness by wearing a pair of red socks as well.

The sad thing is that since that photo was taken more than 3,500 Australian men have lost their battle with prostate cancer. The early detection of prostate cancer can be as simple as having a blood test to check your PSA levels. With no medical qualifications behind me, I urge all males to talk to their GP to determine the best method for prostate cancer testing. It is time to 'man up'. If you were in the chamber last year when I distributed the kits and you or your partner have not since had your PSA levels checked, then why not? You have a responsibility to yourself and, more importantly, you have a responsibility to your family.

The risk of prostate cancer increases markedly for males over the age of 50. More men die of prostate cancer than women die of breast cancer, but the most sobering statistic is that one in seven Australian males will get prostate cancer. Using the same statistics, nine members in this House will be diagnosed with prostate cancer. Members, look around the chamber right now and count your nine. You are now looking at someone who will be diagnosed with prostate cancer. That also means, Mr Deputy Speaker and member for Currumbin, that four of the women members in this chamber will have their male partners diagnosed with prostate cancer. You might be lucky and it may not be your partner, but it could be your father, your uncle, your brother, your son or your son-in-law.

Early detection is the key. In 1984, the five-year relative survival rate for prostate cancer was 58.5 per cent. In 2014, through early detection and intervention, that rate had risen to 95 per cent. There are key risk factors that increase the likelihood of prostate cancer: genetics, diet and eating too much

processed meat or foods high in fat, and lifestyle. By distributing these kits today I hope to encourage all members to wear their red socks lapel badge and red socks in the chamber tomorrow to show your awareness of prostate cancer and the importance of annual testing. If you are a little too shy to wear these socks, keep them front and centre in your sock drawer to remind you or your partner to get tested every year. I encourage every mature male to wear their red socks and to do an annual test with their GP.