



Speech By  
**Barry O'Rourke**


**MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON**

---

Record of Proceedings, 28 March 2019

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Skin Cancer**

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (2.15 pm): In recent weeks both the member for Cairns and I have gone under the knife to have skin cancers removed. For the member for Cairns, it was an SCC that was removed from his upper chest—and his tears have been washing across my desk all week. For me, my SCC was a small raised sore on my elbow that would not heal. It was only a couple of millimetres across and I did not do anything about it for over 12 months. As a result, I have ended up with a cut that is about six centimetres long and quite deep.

I thought it was timely to remind members of some of the information provided by the Cancer Council website. Since introducing Australians to the 'Slip! Slop! Slap!' campaign 35 years ago, the Cancer Council has implemented many highly successful skin cancer prevention campaigns. Over that time, we have seen positive changes in sun related behaviour and attitudes. Australia's improved skin cancer survival rates are generally higher than they are in other countries because we are now more aware of the science of skin cancer and are detecting skin cancers earlier.

Recent skin cancer awareness campaigns include 'No tan is worth dying for' and 'Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek & Slide'. For best protection, the Cancer Council recommends a combination of sun protection measures: slip on some sun protective clothing, slop on some broad high-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen, slap on a hat, seek shade and slide on some good quality sunglasses. The sooner a skin cancer is identified and treated, the better a person's chances of avoiding surgery or, in the case of serious melanoma or skin cancers, potential disfigurement or even death.

It is a good idea for people to talk to their doctor about their levels of risk and for advice on early detection. People should develop a regular habit of checking their skin for new spots or changes in existing freckles and moles. For the male population in particular, we need to move away from the, 'She'll be right, mate' attitude and seek early advice from medical practitioners. I encourage people to make the time to look after their skin and consult their doctor early.