




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Cancer Treatment

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.21 am): Queensland's population is growing and ageing. Our state has grown by 840,000 people over the past decade, and of that population growth about 230,000 people are aged 65 or older. While cancer can strike at any age, living longer makes it more likely that people will be diagnosed with, live with and possibly die from cancer. One in two of us will be diagnosed with cancer in our lifetime. Think about the person sitting next to you. Chances are that one of you has had or will get cancer. It means that pretty much every one of us has lost a loved one to this dreaded disease and we all know people who are fighting it right now.

Thanks to cutting-edge research and the work of our fantastic hospitals and health staff, the rate of deaths from cancer has been slowly but steadily decreasing. Too often the cost of treating cancer is astronomical for both the patients and their families. For Scott Morrison to say that cancer treatment is free just demonstrates how out of touch he is.

The Palaszczuk Labor government is committed to fighting cancer on every front. We have been investing in infrastructure, services and research. There is nothing more heartbreaking than childhood cancers. That is why we are investing \$20 million building a new inpatient ward with six additional oncology beds at the Queensland Children's Hospital. With Sony we are building a special place for adolescents to fight cancer together at the RBWH. We are refurbishing accommodation lodges for regional cancer patients in Townsville, Toowoomba and Brisbane, which will ease the financial and emotional strain cancer patients experience. Because Queensland is a world leader in research, we are investing \$25 million in the Queensland Genomics Health Alliance. More than 30 medical science research projects are underway through this initiative, studying cancers like lung cancer and melanoma. We know that one-third of cancers can be prevented and another third can be detected earlier, which is why the Palaszczuk government has invested in preventive health measures and making sure Queenslanders keep up to date with lifesaving cancer screening programs.

Too often people suffer through cancer hidden away. That is why I am so pleased that Labor has made health services for cancer patients and the need to invest in those to provide world-class care an election issue. Fighting cancer is hard enough. People should not have to go broke to win the fight of their life. Last week Bill Shorten announced that, if elected, he will invest \$60 million to expand cancer services at the RBWH, giving Queenslanders faster access to cutting-edge cancer care. This new investment is part of federal Labor's \$2.3 billion Medicare cancer plan, the most important boost to Medicare since Bob Hawke created it.

Scott Morrison and Greg Hunt should realise that when you cut health services you cut short the lives of Queenslanders living with cancer. Every Queenslander deserves the very best care. Only Labor has demonstrated a commitment to our health system to make this a reality.