




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day; Chroming

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.48 am): I want to thank you, Mr Speaker, for lighting up the House last night in honour of Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day. It was a kind gesture that I know meant the world to parents who have had to deal with the pain of losing their baby whether through miscarriage, stillbirth or newborn death—so thank you again, Mr Speaker. Thank you to Vicki Wilson, Emma Holmes and Aleece Thompson from Angel Gowns Australia for meeting with me recently and sharing your stories. Also thank you to Samantha Payne of the Pink Elephants Support Network. In fact, to all the brave women and families who shared their stories yesterday, please know that you are in our thoughts.

I want to address the issue of inhalant abuse—sometimes called ‘chroming’. We have all heard the devastating stories recently of mostly young people using regular household products to get high and ending up severely injured. Chroming is a serious issue affecting some of the most vulnerable people in our community and, heartbreakingly, it disproportionately affects young people. Last financial year, 98 people were admitted a total of 141 times to our hospitals due to volatile solvent misuse. While this might be a very small percentage of the drug related presentations in our hospitals, it remains worrying. Sadly, of those 98 patients, 45 were aged between 10 and 19, and a further 27 were aged under 29.

It is important that manufacturers who know their products have a high risk of being misused change their formulas where they can. Unilever, to their credit, contacted me recently and acknowledged that one of their aerosol deodorant products is being misused by young people for the practice of chroming. I very much welcome their cooperation. I have asked Queensland’s Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, to convene a round table of industry, retailers, and community based services and clinicians to discuss potential responses. I have asked Unilever to participate in that round table. Inhalant abuse is a complex social problem requiring support from government, industry and the community based sector. Just like with petrol reformulation, it may be possible for manufacturers to change their products to make them less intoxicating. Most importantly, we need to support these young people.

Every year the Palaszczuk government invests almost \$112 million into drug and alcohol treatment services for Queenslanders. Queensland Health’s specialist youth statewide support service, Dovetail, has developed and promotes a range of inhalant resources including fact sheets on effective responses and a retailers’ guide to help manage access to inhalants. Dovetail provides training and assistance to workforces, communities, service providers and other groups. This year they have run training workshops for shopping centre security and retailers at Chermside and Helensvale Westfields, as well as training staff from residential care services, youth justice, child safety and staff from emergency departments on how they can best respond to patients who have used inhalants. In the 10 years that Dovetail has operated, they have assisted six communities to develop action plans to better respond to inhalant use. I look forward to hearing the outcomes of the Chief Health Officer’s round table.