




Speech By
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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Mother's Day; Stillbirth

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (2.20 pm): It was Mother's Day on Sunday and I hope that the mums of Queensland had a fantastic day. I want to recognise that being a mother or a mother figure comes in many forms. There are many different ways to mother and it is not always a role we are born to. There are stepmothers, mothers-in-law and women who are still waiting to be mums. There are carers and guardians, fur baby mums and the people in our lives who form part of the village that it takes to help raise our family, because it does take a village to raise a child and to nurture the family.

Mother's Day is a day when our social media feeds are flooded with happy images and sentiments, but there is no getting around the fact it is a really tough day for some, especially mums who have lost a pregnancy or had a baby born sleeping, a stillbirth. This is a tragedy that affects six families in Australia every single day and, unfortunately, this rate has been relatively unchanged for 20 years. Recently a beautiful local couple in my community, Georgia and Tyson, had a beautiful baby girl, Sophia. Sadly, she was still at birth and they said their farewells to baby Sophia in the hospital using a cuddle cot. I thank Georgia and Tyson for their permission, their blessing and their encouragement to share their story with the parliament today.

I was made aware of the sad circumstances of the birth of their daughter because of a Facebook fundraiser that the couple organised to provide more cuddle cots for other local families who have had a stillbirth. To say that I am blown away by their care and consideration for others at this time is an understatement. It is a very rare person who, at a time when their hearts are broken, turns to how they can help others in their grief when going through similar circumstances. I am sure all members of this House would agree that it takes a really special person to think of someone else at a time like that. I am so grateful to this beautiful family for their care for others. Georgia is now determined to turn her family's sadness into action, and she is now considering how she can advocate to prevent this from happening to other families. I have no doubt she will go on to do great things in this space.

In 2009 Queensland Health launched the Safer Baby Bundle. This was aimed at reducing the number of stillbirths in Queensland, in part by educating expectant parents about the risk factors for stillbirth. Some of those are as follows. Firstly, count your baby's movements. If you notice a change or a decline in your baby's movements, do not be afraid to call your healthcare provider and ask for advice. There is absolutely no harm in doing so. Secondly, be sure to sleep on your side from 28 weeks gestation to ensure continual blood flow to your baby while you are asleep. However, if you are like me and you wake up on your back, do not panic; roll over and go back to sleep again. Thirdly, make sure that if you smoke you give up and avoid passive smoking. While smoking rates have decreased significantly in recent years, some expectant parents do still smoke. This does mean dad has to stop, too. Of course, make sure you are in regular contact with your primary healthcare provider, whether it is your ob-gyn, your midwife or your general practitioner. It is never too early to engage your provider so they can monitor your health and look after mum as well as baby. The great challenge here is that no two pregnancies are alike. What is normal in one pregnancy may be cause for concern in another.

Finally, I would say to all members of this House that I know that stillbirth is still a very hard topic to address. It can be tempting for someone who knows a friend who has been through this bereavement to not bring it up out of a concern to not hurt the family. However, the wonderful charity Sands has a really fabulous two-page document called 'Words Matter'. That is to help family, friends and the community provide meaningful support in an appropriate way to loved ones who have suffered this tragic loss. I found it a really useful document and a great reminder that although sometimes it feels more comfortable to say nothing, the right thing to do is to reach out and check in with that person not just at the time they suffer that bereavement but down the track too, just to periodically check in. I am going to table this for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Words Matter' [618](#).

I think it is a fantastic document. What it really narrows in on is that saying nothing is almost never the right thing to do. You need to show that you care; you need to show that you are thinking of the baby as well. As Sands so eloquently says, a little life is not a little loss. For those mums this Mother's Day and every Mother's Day, I say we are there for you.