




Speech By
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Record of Proceedings, 5 March 2024

ADJOURNMENT

Women and Girls' Health Strategy

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (7.15 pm): It is Queensland Women's Week, so what better time to release the Miles government's groundbreaking Women and Girls' Health Strategy. One of the key planks of this strategy is the vital funding around pelvic pain and endometriosis, a diagnosis that is much more front of mind than it was just 10 years ago. In the interests of keeping this important conversation going, I will share with the House something that many members of the House already know—that is, my journey around being diagnosed with adenomyosis last year, followed by my hysterectomy last Christmas. I want to say up-front that every woman's experience is different and that some of the treatments that did not work for me would be perfect for other women. There are no one-size-fits-all treatments for these kinds of conditions, but all stories are important.

Like many women, I have had chronic heavy menstrual bleeding since my first period when I was 13. My parents tried their best to help. I was put on the pill, I got some additional medication for what was quickly becoming anaemia, and on it went for the next 20 years. In my early 30s, as I prepared to run for parliament, the heavy bleeding also became very irregular and would often go for weeks at a time, so I had an IUD, a Mirena, put in which so often fixes the issue. However, for me the issue became even worse. I experienced what is called flooding. I could not even leave a public bathroom one day. I actually was trapped in there shortly after I was elected. It was pretty embarrassing and horrific, and a friend had to help me out. With supplementary medication, eventually the Mirena worked and I had no further issues until my daughter was born, when the issue returned and became worse. This time I met with a surgeon. I had an ablation, which is where they burn out the inside of your uterus to stop the issue returning. For most women, if the other things do not work that does. For me, still no.

Last year I had another scan and that picked up new fibroids. I received a final official diagnosis of adenomyosis, and there was a mass there as well that my doctor did not like. She decided that I should really have my uterus out by Christmas and I thought that was for the best. Despite the significant recovery from major surgery, it actually for me was not even as bad as period pain. The day after my surgery the nurse came in and said, 'How is your pain? What relief do you need?' I said, 'Actually, I'm fine. It's just like it is every month, pretty much.' That sums it all up, doesn't it?

I am now two months post-op and I can say that for me it was a great decision. Deciding to have major surgery is daunting, but I am already experiencing the benefits. I do not have to worry about my energy levels dipping. I certainly encourage women in a similar situation to think about it.