



The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Sport

TRANSCRIPT

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REMARKS
LAUNCH OF THE PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDS FOR ENDOMETRIOSIS
CANBERRA

E&OE...

GREG HUNT:

Thanks very much to Nicole. I heard the champagne corks going before I spoke.

To you, for your immense passion and leadership, and Gai equally for yourself. To Catherine, this is a shared, utterly non-partisan – bipartisan is the wrong word – non-partisan commitment that I think Parliament and this Parliament will now take up.

To Nola, Nola has made me cry on many occasions, and almost all my fault. But her story, her voice is one of the powerful voices in this house about the challenge of endometriosis and the impact on so many women's lives.

And then to all of the magnificent voices today, it took a lot of courage to stand up in front of this audience and to say what you've said. It took a lot of courage, so I want to acknowledge you.

In particular, acknowledge Donna and Janet and their leadership in this space, and introduce you to a group of people that I brought along that were not expecting to come today, and that is the current president and deputy president of the Australian Medical Students' Association, led by Rob, and the incoming president and deputy president of the Australian Medical Students' Association, led by Alexandra – two men giving way to two women.

I can confidently guarantee they are brilliant medical students and leaders of the future will leave this room and never forget the experience, and that they will make sure that AMSA will ensure that all emerging doctors in Australia from this moment forwards, and you can trace it to this moment forwards, will be aware of the fundamental importance.

I cannot speak more powerfully than the beautiful voices that have told their stories today, the chronic pain, the infertility, the crushing mental health challenges, and in some cases the most tragic of outcomes, whether it is through the condition or through the mental health impacts.

Your voices have set that out. What I can do is to acknowledge that pain and to acknowledge that reality, and I really want to do three things today.

One is to talk about the acknowledgement, two is to talk about the action, and three is to talk about the research, Grant's work and the work of so many others.

In terms of the acknowledgement, let's see if I can do this, the time is long overdue to bring this condition out of the dark. I don't need to repeat my own description myself, Sylv has very eloquently given my own words back to me in the place that I never expected it.

Thank you for that. But let me say something on behalf of all of those in Parliament and all of those who have been responsible for our medical system, I apologise.

This condition should have been acknowledged at an earlier time in a more powerful way, and it will never be forgotten again.

The second thing is to say, well, now that you're on the map – long overdue, but now that you're on the map – what do we do?

And so I want to announce today that, in conjunction with the Australian Coalition for Endometriosis, with Endo Australia and all of the different groups, we will develop the first National Action Plan for Endometriosis.

This is a tribute to your work. To Gay, and to Nicole, and to Catherine, and to Nola and to everybody else, and so everything's on the table, the combination of education and training for girls and young women, for men, for our medical professionals, public awareness, but also the Medicare treatments and the steps forward in terms of research.

So we will work out a process with ACE, we will follow that through, and we will keep going until we've got the right (inaudible), so the first national action plan.

(inaudible) recognition within the national health priorities, the form and the shape give us some flexibility.

Catherine and I will need to work together on that, but it will be included within those priorities in one way, shape or form, and I think that that will be a very powerful outcome.

Related to that, the Jean Hailes foundation, as Catherine noted, will make this one of their absolute priorities for Women's Health Week, and this Women's Health Week will have the first true focus on endometriosis.

And then that brings me to the last of the areas, because recognition, medical training is all fundamental. The trick is where we ultimately want to get to.

It is a difficult challenge to crack, but we have cracked leukaemia, we are making immense progress on breast cancer, we have made huge progress on so many other areas, never solved perfectly, but extraordinary outcomes.

Hepatitis C, which has taken 800 lives, a new drug Eplclusa, which has come onto the PBS, will cure 90 per cent of people, 90 per cent of people. So we can make progress in this area.

So we will begin with a targeted call for research under the Medical Research Future Fund that will come out of the national action plan, and then we'll announce the form of that and we'll take your guidance over the coming months.

And, as a down-payment on that, I want to announce a grant to the University of Queensland, led by Professor Grant Montgomery, of \$160,000, for (inaudible) diagnosis for genomics research, and then for the development of initial research on better treatments aiming ultimately at the potential for a cure.

It will not happen overnight. It will be a grand journey, but it's a journey we are all on. We thank you, we acknowledge you, and today is your long-overdue day.

(ENDS)