



The Hon. Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister

TRANSCRIPT
SPEECH, OVARIAN CANCER AUSTRALIA TEAL RIBBON PARLIAMENTARY
BREAKFAST
AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT HOUSE, ACT
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EO&E...

PRIME MINISTER: Thank you, Jane. Thank you, Caitlin. You can't put it more simply than that and I'll return to that in just a minute.

Can I acknowledge the Ngunnawal people, their elders past and present and emerging.

Can I acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues who are here with us today and of course the leader of the opposition, Anthony Albanese.

To you, Jane, and to you, Marina, thank you for the amazing job you do in leading this tremendous organisation in your search for hope. And to all the women wherever you are here today or perhaps watching or hearing this later, fighting. And their families, and those who love them, those who are caring for them, turning up every day, supporting the treatments, being there to hold their hand later. Fighting together, every single day for something incredibly precious, the most precious gift of all things, and that is life.

We've heard now from Caitlin, we look at Kevin, and Lilith and Willow. We can all tell stories of inspiring parents Lillith and Willow, that have impacted our lives. I know my colleagues can tell those stories, but I'll tell you what, I think you top them in the way that you can look at your mother and her tremendous courage and what she's done here today. You heard her passion, her strength, her determination, her caring nature, and we've seen her tears. And we've shed a few, I'm sure this morning, as others have at so many other times.

She walks in the footsteps of other very courageous women who have come here and many of us who join here today and have done so for many years now.

I remember here two years ago, hearing from Jill, and from Kristen, talking with them, seeing their courage and that emotion, they are terribly missed. The memory of that day stays with me. And I'm sure all who've made this an important part of our involvement here in national life.

The legacy lives with us, not just this day of your message, but each and every day.

And you're right, Caitlin, the past year for the country has been extraordinarily difficult and amazing things have been achieved.

We've all learned something about ourselves over the course of the past year and we're still learning.

We've done it separately, individually, but we've also done it together. And we have learnt that we are a little bit stronger than we perhaps thought we were.

But I'm sure that's something you discover each and every day.

We've learnt about the incredibly talented people in our medical research sector, in particular, and how they've been able to accelerate and drive change when supported and the focus while it has been on COVID, the lessons learned apply to every endeavour in medical research.

One of the things we've all experienced in the past year was the joys and frustrations of zoom and remote meetings. We all at some point had problems with a mute button.

One of the people I met remotely was Jacinta who lives in the Shire, in my own electorate. It was the first time we'd interacted, we got on really well, on her 59th birthday Jacinta was diagnosed with a serious ovarian cancer that had already spiralled into her bowel. It was a terrible shock. Her symptoms had only been around for a matter of days. There she was living a normal life, a wife, a proud mum of two adult children. Then, bang, she was thrust into two major surgeries and gruelling rounds of chemotherapy. And that's the diabolical thing about this cancer, as you all know, too well, by the time you know about it, it has already got a head start. One minute you are thinking about making school lunches, getting to work, going to the office, the next minute none of that matters anymore, as your doctor lays out what lies ahead of you and the grim challenge you face.

Speaking to Jacinta, because she is one of the beneficiaries of one of those decisions that are made in this place, shared decisions by all members of our parliament, which was to expand access to Lynparza under the PBS.

As you said, it's a life changing medication that will help a further 300 Australian women each year. Each course would normally cost around \$140,000. And because of that decision, Lynparza now only costs \$40 dollars, or \$6.60 on a concession card.

The listing of life saving and life changing medications on the PBS is one of the proudest achievements, I think, of any government. This is why we have advanced societies. This is why we have advanced economies. This is why we have institutions of government. This is why we pay taxes, to do these things. But as you've reminded us, progress we have made is still not complete and there is still a very long way to go.

Jacinta was able to tell me she'd been able to return to work and she's back running, and can once again enjoy her husband Oliver's wonderful cooking and best of all she told me she can laugh again.

She's still doing well. And she has reminded me we have to look to the future, as Caitlin has also here this morning.

So we must increase our efforts, the challenges you've set down this morning Caitlin I'm happy to take up, as we have in the years that have led up to this time, and I know that burden will be shared by the others who have joined me here today.

We make progress, but there is more to make.

We are the single biggest funder of cancer research in Australia, as a government. Invested more than \$71 million in ovarian cancer research through the National Health and Medical Research Council.

And we're supporting the sort of high quality research that will improve diagnosis and treatment, as well as our understanding of its causes. This was noted earlier, Jane, some \$16.9 million from the Medical Research Future Fund has been invested in groundbreaking ovarian cancer projects like the work done by Ovarian Cancer Australia. We are also supporting that fantastic traceback project, which identifies and offers testing to women and their families not previously tested for BRCA 1 and 2 gene mutations associated with breast and ovarian cancer.

We've been proud to fund the Ovarian Cancer Case Management Pilot, which we announced at this breakfast two years ago, which has led to the Teal Support Programme. That Pilot means that if you're diagnosed with ovarian cancer, you can have access to support and care no matter where you live. And you rightly make the point about those living in regional parts of the country, throughout what can be a terribly harrowing journey, this access has never been more important.

Around 200 women across Australia are getting that help right now. And I'm pleased to announce today that we're providing an additional million dollars to extend the pilot for a further 12 months.

That will keep going.

We'll just keep going, because we want you to keep going.

To Ovarian Cancer Australia, in this year, your 20th, you are everything that is being expected of you. And I know your work is greatly appreciated and I thank you for the great work you do.

It's a pleasure to be with you supporting this vital cause.

I'm sure my colleagues agree that we have a great privilege to do what we do each and every day in this place.

We have the privilege of meeting Australians from every walk of life, dealing with the full gambit of challenges that people face in their daily lives.

We meet them here in this place. We meet them out there across our land.

But I've never seen more courage than in the women who've spoken from this podium each and every year.

Thank you.

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