

COMMITTEES
Community Affairs Committee
Report Speech

Senator MOORE (Queensland)—Senator Ferris will be here shortly to present this report as a member of the committee. I thank Senator Scullion for putting the report on the agenda. I will make some comments on behalf of our committee. We are very proud today as members of the Community Affairs Committee to share in the exciting prospect of taking note of this report in the chamber. Because we have limited time, we have agreed to share the time amongst us.

I want to commence the comments today by paying great tribute to all the people who gave their time, their effort and their genuine courage to come before our committee, sharing their stories and encouraging us as a committee to move forward on this very important challenge. The challenge before all of us as members of the committee is to accept that gynaecological cancer is killing too many women in our community and we must share in the efforts to stop that happening. That sharing will be done by all of us and indeed our committee has looked closely at moving forward to encourage awareness campaigns and genuine research efforts to reinforce the wonderful work that is already being done.

One of the marvellous parts about being a member of this committee is to meet with the people who are currently working in this field in our country. Most of us knew a little bit about gynaecological cancer before we commenced on this committee, but we were empowered by the examples of the efforts that came before us and we want to thank the people, particularly the gynaecological oncologists, the nurses, the social workers and all the medical professionals, that gave their time.

I know other senators will also be speaking on this, but I want to pay particular tribute to our secretariat, because the secretariat walked this journey with us. It was their commitment, help, support, knowledge and humour that kept many of us going at times when we came very close to being emotionally troubled by the evidence we heard. I thank Elton Humphry's team, and most particularly this time Ms McDonald, Kerrie Martain and Kate Palfreyman with the great support of Leonie Peake and Ingrid Zappe. Thank you so much. You made our work easier and we now have the challenge to move forward, supporting the work that was put in place earlier by the cancer inquiry under the auspices of former Senator Peter Cook. I know he is watching us and wishing us well. We will talk many times in this place about the recommendations that came out of this wonderful effort. The Community Affairs Committee has learnt. We will work and make sure the messages are heard. I now ask other senators to join in this debate.