

Media statement

21 March 2019

It's time to raise the awareness on Endometriosis

Gather your girlfriends for a morning tea on **Saturday 30 March**, to raise money and awareness of Endometriosis as part of Endometriosis Queensland's contribution to **Worldwide Endometriosis March**.

Endometriosis is a common disease which affects 1 in 10 Australian women. It is a disease where tissue, similar to the lining of the uterus is found in and on other parts of the body. The tissue follows the menstrual cycle and bleeds, which causes inflammation, scar tissue, cysts and adhesions.

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service Director of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Dr Marc Miller says Endometriosis can be painful and difficult to diagnose.

"Endometriosis is a chronic health disorder that affects around 700,000 Australian women and girls. It can cause debilitating pain and can lead to mental health complications, social and economic stress and infertility," Dr Miller said.

"Some patients suffer in silence for many years and can endure diagnostic delays of between seven and twelve years. It's important that we inform women and health professionals about this conditions and available treatments to manage this potentially debilitating disease," Dr Miller said.

Endometriosis Association Queensland (QENDO) is a not for profit organisation, established in 1988 and was key in the development and launch of the National Action Plan for Endometriosis.

In July 2018, Endometriosis Association Queensland (QENDO) joined forces with the Federal Government who released its first **National Action Plan for Endometriosis** to improve the quality of life of patients through better treatment, diagnosis and aiming to ultimately find a cure.

QENDO sits on The National Endometriosis Steering Group who will oversee the implementation of the National Action Plan over the next five years, supported by an initial \$1 million investment. QENDO is dedicated to educating, informing and supporting those affected by Endometriosis including women on the Sunshine Coast.

QENDO Sunshine Coast Education Coordinator Jessica O'Neill knows first-hand what suffers of Endometriosis go through, having been diagnosed with the disease herself.

"It's a constant struggle, dealing with the pain and trying to explain to people what is wrong, many people actually don't believe you. It affects you mentally, physically and financially. It affects your relationships and your career.

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“When I was diagnosed a part of me was relieved as I had a reason for the pain, but it also opened up a myriad of questions I had about how the disease would affect me long term. That’s where the assistance and support of QENDO came in, and it is such an important service to be able to access.

QENDO President Jessica Taylor said that while endometriosis is being spoken about more and more, thanks to people like Jessica O’Neill sharing their stories, there is still a long way to go.

“Over the past couple of years we’ve seen Endometriosis become a much bigger conversation as the public is realising the true toll of this disease on the community. I say ‘community’ because it’s not just a ‘women’s issue’ - Endometriosis has a huge impact on not only on individuals and their families, but on our health system, our education system and businesses across the country,” Jessica Taylor said.

‘For too long women have been suffering in silence or had their symptoms dismissed due to a lack of understanding of this disease. It has to stop.

“Our goal is to be the first place women turn to for help and information about living with Endometriosis and let them know they aren’t alone there is support available and people willing to help,” she said.

“QENDO has supported more than 10,000 people affected by the disease and runs Australia’s only dedicated endometriosis support line, and receives calls from women around the world in need of support and are currently working on bringing education/awareness programs into the local community and schools in 2019,” Jessica said.

March is the global awareness month for endometriosis and this is an opportunity to shine a light on this disease.

Events are being held across the state National Endometriosis Awareness month. To host or take part in an event visit www.qendo.org.au

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