

Friday, June 5, 2009



**CHUCKLING FROM THE ENSUITE:** Health Minister Lara Giddings and, from left, Stuart Clues, Steve Old, David Johnson and Ross Butler check out the new *MANual*. Picture: SAM ROSEWARNE

## Bottom line on men's health

DAMIEN BROWN

WHEN it comes to health, Health Minister Lara Giddings does not beat around the bush.

"A rectal examination is not everyone's idea of a good day out but it does save lives," Ms Giddings said yesterday.

"Too many men are dying of embarrassment every single day."

Ms Giddings launched a new light-hearted booklet aimed at getting men to take health seriously. Focusing on cancer prevention and detection, *MANual* uses the analogy of a car to get across the message of early detection and prevention.

### Cancers' heavy toll on blokes

□ In 2005, 137 Tasmanian women and 148 men were diagnosed with melanoma but only nine women died from the disease, compared with 28 men.

□ Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in

Tasmania, with 485 men diagnosed each year.

□ In 2005, 158 men were diagnosed with lung cancer — 151 died.

□ Bowel cancer claims 90 lives every day, most of them men.

Cancer Screening and Control Services state manager Gail Raw said that, sadly, men took better care of cars than their own bodies.

"Women have been putting their legs up in the air and enduring the likes of a Pap smear, which is equally as uncomfortable as a rectal

exam, but we aren't complaining," she said.

"Too many men are dying unnecessarily from cancers that could be easily prevented."

Labor MP Ross Butler said he had been macho about health-related matters until he was diagnosed with prostate cancer that required

a life-saving operation.

"Because I got it early and took those steps, I am now up and running and better than before," he said.

Ms Giddings said she hoped the manual would make a difference.

"I suspect the place we will find this is in the toilet. That is where men do most of their reading, isn't it?" she said.

"So women, if you hear chuckling from the ensuite, don't worry."