



Speech by

Ms Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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MATER PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES BILL

Ms GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (4.57 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution in support of the Mater Public Health Services Bill 2008. I believe this bill is a most practical bill that goes a long way towards cementing the excellent working relationship that exists currently between the state government and the Mater Misericordiae Hospital. This special relationship between Queensland Health and the Mater has been recognised in this bill, which has been developed in recognition of the commitment of the parties to maintain and enhance this ongoing partnership. I take this opportunity to commend both the Mater and the minister for highlighting the crucial relationship between the parties in this bill and to further commend the Mater on the first-rate hospital service that it provides to the people of Brisbane and throughout Queensland. I welcome that the object of this bill is to acknowledge the major contribution made by the Mater and the Sisters of Mercy since 1911 to the delivery of public patient services. Obviously it is important that these services are maintained as being clinically viable and that adequate funding is provided while ensuring the most efficient and effective use of public funding. That is provided for in this bill.

The bill puts in place practical measures to ensure that the Mater continues to provide the delivery of public patient services that serve the patients' best interests while acknowledging the philosophy underpinning the delivery of health services by the Mater Hospital as a key principle. The bill authorises Queensland Health's chief executive, acting on behalf of the state and modelled on the current 20-year agreement between the parties, to enter an agreement with the Mater detailing the service delivery obligations and assessment of the Mater's performance. Importantly, the bill also allows a regulation to be made about matters that must be included in the agreement relating to the funding that must be provided to the Mater for staff entitlements. I welcome the provision that ensures that in the development of any such regulation Queensland Health will consult closely with the Mater and other key stakeholders.

Other practical measures included in this bill relate to the disclosure of information. As all in this House know, the proper care of patients often involves obtaining patient information by health professionals from relevant sources. Disclosure of this information is currently limited between Queensland Health and the Mater due to confidentiality provisions in the Health Services Act. Similarly, Commonwealth privacy legislation limits disclosure by the Mater. The bill overcomes these barriers by authorising designated persons in both institutions to disclose patient information to health professionals solely for the care or treatment of the patient to whom the information relates. I think this is a most sensible amendment as, obviously, that information is often crucial in the proper treatment of patients in the public health system. Similarly, amendments to the Child Protection Act will ensure the CEO of the Mater, acting as a prescribed entity, will be able to exchange child safety related information and coordinate the delivery of services to children. This amendment makes sense as it will enable and facilitate the exchange of child safety related information between the Mater and other service providers. This is in recognition of the fact that the Mater is a major provider of health services to children in this state and plays a vital and active role in child protection.

This is an important bill in ensuring the ongoing feasibility of the Mater and removing unnecessary barriers that were standing in the way of the Mater, together with other service providers, from delivering

the best possible care to patients of all ages. The bill will enhance the ability of the Mater to continue the great work it has undertaken over many years in an environment that ensures its position as a major provider of public health services by providing a statutory framework for the agreed arrangements with Queensland Health. It is pleasing to note that all stakeholders consulted support this bill.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the Mater and the Sisters of Mercy for a job well done in the delivery of health services over their many years in operation. Who would have thought in 1911, when a group of Sisters of Mercy came together, that their vision would have culminated in what the Mater is today. This bill acknowledges and ensures the Mater is able to carry on delivering beneficial public health services in Queensland. Many members of my family, friends, relatives and I have used the Mater's services over a number of years. On every occasion we have all been greatly impressed by the high standard of service delivery. This bill maintains that proud tradition. I commend the bill to the House.