



Speech by

Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Wednesday, 2 September 2009

CRIMINAL CODE (MEDICAL TREATMENT) AMENDMENT BILL: DECLARED URGENT

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.21 am): I second the motion moved by the honourable Leader of the House. The Criminal Code (Medical Treatment) Amendment Bill is a critically important legislative measure that requires urgent consideration by this parliament. This urgency is not borne out of a desire to disadvantage any member of the parliament or to stifle debate on the matter. This is an important issue and needs to be dealt with accordingly. The urgency is borne out of a real need to ensure that medical practitioners in Queensland have certainty in respect of the protections available to them under the criminal law.

We all rely upon medical professionals throughout this state to make their professional decisions frankly and fearlessly, with primacy being given to a doctor's medical advice in consultation with their patient. There has been significant public reporting of concerns raised by medical practitioners in some public hospitals in Brisbane. Those concerns were the result of doubts over the current protections afforded to them by the criminal law.

This parliament has a duty to the people of Queensland to ensure medical professionals are able to do their job. This issue is not solely about pregnancy terminations. Potentially it affects all medical treatments. When urgent issues arise, as parliamentarians we must act urgently. Both doctors and patients need to be certain of their rights and responsibilities under the law and the amendments proposed do precisely that.

There is a need to clarify these matters sooner rather than later to ensure that medical services in Queensland are given the protection they require under the law. It is an unsatisfactory result, both in policy and in law, to leave in limbo the hardworking medical professionals across our state who need to treat their patients but are left uncertain of how legally they may best do that in the absence of the bill becoming law. I commend the motion.