



Speech by


## Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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### HEALTH AND HOSPITALS NETWORK AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL AND HEALTH LEGISLATION (HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGULATION NATIONAL LAW) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (9.49 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Health and Hospitals Network and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I thought it extremely important to stand here tonight and speak to this bill given the benefits that it will provide to my wonderful electorate of Nanango. Within the electorate of Nanango we have four hospitals: the Nanango Hospital, the Kingaroy or the South Burnett Regional Hospital, the Kilcoy Hospital and the Esk Hospital. Following the setting up of the new hospital and health boards, the Nanango electorate will be involved with three different boards. I am pleased to support the appointment of Mr Michael Horan as the chair of the Darling Downs Hospital and Health Board. What a wonderful appointment that will be. Also, I support the appointments of Dr Paul Alexander of Metro North Hospital and Health Board and Mary Corbett of the West Moreton Hospital and Health Board, which will look after the Esk Hospital. I have had the opportunity to speak to both Mr Horan and Mary Corbett. I look forward to working with them. They are very enthusiastic about our regional hospitals.

Under the previous administration, the region that the South Burnett Regional Hospital was put in changed on numerous occasions. It has been placed in and out of so many different health regions that it does not know its own identity. I really look forward to working with the Darling Downs Health Board to re-establish that hospital in one area. The South Burnett Regional Hospital is a large, rural based hospital, but for many years it has been left to fall apart. I acknowledge my predecessor, Dorothy Pratt. In all of her years in this House she fought extremely hard to bring this situation to the attention of the previous Labor government.

This bill allows the people of Queensland, and in particular the people of my electorate, to have faith again in the health system. That is true not only for the patients but also for the nurses, the doctors and the auxiliary staff. This bill will decentralise how our health system is set up, which is a definite move in the right direction. All of the hospitals in my area need help. An example is the Nanango Hospital, which has paint flaking off its walls. It is so bad that a local charity group has offered to paint it. It is almost down to the bare boards. The Kingaroy Hospital has just received a fresh coat of paint, but inside it is falling apart. During the campaign I had the opportunity to go into the Kingaroy Hospital with the then shadow health minister, the member for Caloundra. He was shocked by the diabolical state of that hospital. We went into the renal unit, which was set up in a demountable hut. However, in the planning process they forgot to set aside somewhere for the chemicals or the medications to be stored, so they were stacked along the walls. It was shocking to see.

**Mr Grimwade:** It's a disgrace.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** It is a disgrace. Within my region, the hospitals are lacking some very basic services and they are simple things such as an X-ray machine. I had the opportunity to be in the local

hospital with my eight-year-old nephew who had had a motorbike accident that severely damaged his legs. He needed an X-ray. They could not take him to another hospital by helicopter because of the fog. They put him in an ambulance and, because of the conditions of the roads, the ambulance driver drove at approximately 50 kilometres an hour to get to the closest hospital that could X-ray him. It took them 4½ hours to get there. That poor little boy was in a terrible situation. Therefore, in my opinion the establishment of the boards will provide some assistance with services such as X-rays. They will be able to discuss with local members of our community what is needed.

I congratulate the Minister for Health on moving so swiftly to bring this bill before the House. As I go around my electorate, everyone tells me how pleased they are with the appointment of Mr Springborg as our health minister. Everyone is so pleased for the simple fact that he understands the regions. He understands that babies can be born in the regions. He understands that regional bush communities should be empowered to have a say within their own health regions. On the topic of babies, as I mentioned in my maiden speech, at the South Burnett Regional Hospital some 400 babies are delivered each year. Obviously, one would imagine that that would mean we have a permanent obstetrician or even an anaesthetist.

**Mr Krause:** You would think so.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** One would think so, but we do not. There is not one in the South Burnett Regional Hospital. However, I acknowledge the hard work and dedication of all the staff in the regional hospitals in my electorate. They have to work in some terrible situations. For example, we do not have a safe room in the South Burnett Regional Hospital. I also spoke on this issue in my maiden speech. I would like to explain how a hospital and health board could assist there. The local South Burnett suicide prevention committee could meet with the board and bring this problem to its attention. Our local police have no choice but to become involved when a mental health patient is in the middle of an episode. There is nowhere for that mental health patient to go within our regional hospitals. Just the other day I was told by a constituent that their family member, who was in the middle of an episode, was placed in the children's ward because it was the only safe place in the hospital for them. In my opinion, that is an unacceptable situation.

The introduction of the hospital and health boards will be a first step towards an area I am very interested and involved in, which is red-tape regulation. The board will not be based on a heavy and overregulated framework. It will listen to the people of each local area. Accountability is very much needed in this area; indeed, it is essential. The hospital and health boards will improve all areas of our health system and, by working with my local community, we will be able to deliver better healthcare services to the level that we should expect not only in the regions but all over Queensland. They will restore the confidence of my electorate in this vital area.