




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (5.51 pm): I rise to make a very short contribution in support of the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. I thank the Minister for Health, the Hon. Lawrence Springborg, for bringing this bill before the House. I often get a chance to stand in this great House to talk about the wonderful common-sense legislation that our ministers have been bringing before this House. I also note that you, Mr Deputy Speaker Ruthenberg, as chair of the committee, recommended that this bill be passed. Again, these are common-sense changes. I note that this bill is an extensive reform of the eight Health portfolio acts, with key amendments across a very broad spectrum of health services.

Today I will quickly touch on something extremely important, given the fact that I have three teenage daughters—that is, the extension of the reforms around smoking bans and personal vapourising devices. I want to talk on this issue briefly because I firmly believe that the extension and the standardisation of those smoking bans to our schools and our hospitals is just an excellent step. It will mean that people have to extinguish their cigarettes no less than five metres from the entrance to a school or a hospital.

I can recall being at the Miles hospital years ago—this is one of those generational changes that I am so pleased we are now enshrining in legislation—and seeing the old men smoking. The number of cigarettes patients were able to have was limited to, I think, five a day. Quite often the patient's spouse—their wife or their husband—would bring in their cigarettes and they would sit out on the veranda and puff away. That was that generation. Thankfully, generational change has just gradually happened. I am really proud to be standing here supporting this legislation. By the time my daughters are my age—in many years to come—there will be no smoking. Let us hope that that is the world we are bringing our children into.

This change, again, is common sense. One of the issues we have is that smokers just happen to congregate. At the Kingaroy regional hospital in my area you see all those smokers. You may have a nine-month pregnant woman coming in to the hospital to have a baby. While I am on that point, can I say that we have more babies in Kingaroy than any other regional hospital bar Mount Isa. That is to the credit of the amazing nurses and the amazing Darling Downs health board. It will be wonderful that the mums, dads and little kids coming to the hospital will no longer have to walk through a smoke haze. The same applies to kids going to school. The reason this is so important—I do not mean to labour the point—is that it is the little children who are watching the parents smoke. So this change will mean that there is another place where children do not see adults smoking.

Earlier one of the other members spoke about the health of staff. That is also really important. If no smoking is allowed anywhere near our hospitals and our schools, staff will not be exposed either. It would be great to stand here and talk about how wonderful it would be to extend this further, but obviously we have rights and freedoms.

I might leave it there because I know that there are many other people who would like to speak to the bill and most of the issues have been covered. But I will make one very brief comment. I had to sit in this House and listen to one of the Labor members opposite really not be nice about the changes we have made to the amazing health system we now have here in Queensland. If I have not said it before, I say to my colleagues today in the House: the South Burnett regional hospital, thanks to this health minister and this government, is now performing operations. We are providing a service that the Labor Party never provided to my locals. The reason that is so important is that the good people who live in my area no longer need to travel to receive treatment, even though we have doubled the patient travel subsidy. I always like to point that out. Our hospitals are now running more efficiently. They are being run by local boards. Under this health minister and this government, our hospital system is now the best health system in the country. If this health minister keeps going with the reform he is implementing and keeps improving services, we can become the best health system in Australasia if it is not already. I fully support this bill.