



Speech By
Craig Crawford

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

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**PUBLIC HEALTH (CHILD CARE VACCINATION) AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (3.56 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr Crawford: I will take that interjection and wish her and anybody else who might be having a birthday a happy birthday. I do not want to cover off a number of areas that have already been discussed, but I want to localise this issue to my electorate and the electorates around me. In Cairns in Far North Queensland we are on one of the frontiers of Papua New Guinea. Our medical services and our aeromedical retrieval services, the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the like, are often transporting and treating patients coming out of the top end of Queensland, from the Torres Strait and also many coming from the PNG area, an area where there is at times little or no vaccination and certainly pockets of rampant diseases such as tuberculosis, whooping cough and measles as we have heard members talk about tonight. Medical crews, pilots, nurses, paramedics, either in the air or on the ground, who have to transport these people in a very confined space often do not know that these patients have these diseases at the time. A person gets transported in a small plane for two hours and then sits in an ambulance for another 30 or 40 minutes and then it may be hours later that those crews actually find out that, by the way, that patient you brought in a few hours ago has measles; therefore, you and your ambulance or your aeroplane or whatever is now at risk and has to be decontaminated, you have to be decontaminated and you have to tell your family. I have been in that situation and I know that it is quite stressful for medical staff. However, it is even more stressful for the families around them. A number of staff have young children of their own and they do not want to go home. They do not want to expose their children to that risk. They have the stress of thinking, 'Do I have measles?' or 'Have I picked up TB?' My point is that, although the conversation tonight is not about the medical industry, I do not want to see people working in the childcare industry undergoing the same degree of stress, which affects not only staff but also parents and families.

I totally support the committee's recommendation to pass the bill and, certainly, the objectives of the bill. I endorse the comments of the member for Buderim. His analogy to cigarette smoke was bang on the mark and I totally agree with it. I thank the committee. I commend the bill to the House.