




Speech By  
**Hon. Shannon Fentiman**

**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

---

Record of Proceedings, 12 October 2016

**PUBLIC HEALTH (MEDICINAL CANNABIS) BILL**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.39 pm): I rise to proudly support the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016. This bill demonstrates that Queensland is leading the way in Australia when it comes to unlocking the therapeutic and medicinal properties of cannabis. This bill will put on the table a form of medication that can help alleviate the cruel symptoms of chronic illness, and I know many sufferers across Queensland have been lobbying for this piece of legislation.

Medical research has shown that marijuana in different forms can alleviate or subdue extreme illness. The rational, mature and science based consultation that the health minister opened up on this topic has led to a strong, fair and progressive bill which will give hope and comfort to many Queenslanders suffering with painful illness. I know that the health minister has made sure that medicinal cannabis does not end up in the wrong hands with numerous safeguards in this bill.

Even before I was elected as the member for Waterford, I got to know the Carter family who have been on a long and at times frustrating journey trying to get treatment for their son, Lindsay. Lanai Carter is the co-chair of the Medical Cannabis Advisory Group Queensland and has been one of the most vocal advocates for medicinal cannabis in Queensland. Lanai's son, Lindsay, was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumour in 2013. This tumour triggers violent seizures. Lindsay should be enjoying his childhood. Instead, he needs constant care. Lanai—a Logan mum with an incredible heart—swung into action and has left no stone unturned in finding treatment for Lindsay.

This journey has led the Carter family to Washington state in the US where Lindsay was treated with cannabis therapies. The treatment in America proved a huge success for Lindsay and allowed him to live his normal life like a teenager again. When Lindsay returned to Australia without the medication, the seizures came back. If his family were to try to access the treatment that they know works, they would be treated as criminals under our laws. It just does not make sense. We have to put ourselves in Lindsay's and Lanai's shoes to understand how frustrating it would be to have a drug which works and stops seizures only available in countries thousands of kilometres away and at very huge expense.

It was Lanai Carter who said that everyday Australians are being forced to become criminals to save lives and ease the suffering of their loved ones. These families and these Queenslanders do not need the added burden of being deemed criminals. If this medicine is prescribed to them by their qualified doctor, then we must trust the professional decision which is based on science, reason and research. We must trust the medical profession on this. It is because of Lindsay and many others like him that we need to pass this bill tonight. Tonight I want to pay credit to Lindsay, his mother, Lanai, and father, Gavin, for educating me on this topic and for showing me how important it was that the parliament get this right.

When this bill passes, it will bring Queensland into line with other jurisdictions including Canada, Denmark, Germany, Israel, New Zealand and the United States, to name a few. It is time we got this issue out of the too-hard basket and do what we can to help the lives of those suffering like Loganholme's Lindsay Carter. I commend this bill, and I am proud that it is the Palaszczuk Labor government that is again passing legislation which makes lives better for Queenslanders.