



Speech By  
**Hon. Cameron Dick**


**MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE**

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Record of Proceedings, 22 August 2017

## **HOSPITAL FOUNDATIONS BILL**

### **Introduction**

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (3.56 pm): I present a bill for an act to provide for the establishment, administration and oversight of entities to hold and manage property for particular objects to benefit public health in Queensland, and to amend this act, the Drugs Misuse Act 1986, the Drugs Misuse Regulation 1987 and the Fair Work (Commonwealth Powers) and Other Provisions Act 2009 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Health, Communities, Disabilities Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Hospital Foundations Bill 2017 [\[1396\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Hospital Foundations Bill 2017, explanatory notes [\[1397\]](#).

This bill will ensure the continuing success of hospital foundations in Queensland to support local health services and improve health outcomes for Queenslanders generally. The bill also amends the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 to support Queensland's industrial cannabis industry.

Hospital foundations play a vital role in Queensland's public health system. Over the past 35 years they have supported patients and staff at public hospitals. They raise funds to improve facilities, support educational and training opportunities for staff, fund research, and support the health and wellbeing of communities. In 2015-16 alone, foundations raised over \$70 million for public hospital and health services.

Foundations also work closely with their local communities to provide outcomes at the grassroots. The Ipswich Hospital Foundation has established a wig library for patients who have lost their hair due to various health treatments. The Townsville Hospital Foundation is helping redevelop the Townsville Hospital children's ward. The Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation has contributed \$1.6 million to an innovative integrated electronic medical record and a patient television system. The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Foundation supports and encourages staff by investing in awards such as the Sir Ian McFarlane Awards for Excellence in Nursing Clinical Practice.

Foundations are driven largely by volunteer local community members, with an estimated volunteer workforce of around 4,000 people. To ensure that foundations can continue this important work without unnecessary red tape, foundations need a legislative framework that reflects their work and current operational needs. The bill achieves this by replacing the Hospitals Foundations Act 1982 with contemporary legislation.

We have removed unnecessary prescription and streamlined the structure and operation of foundations while ensuring appropriate oversight of foundations. Foundations will continue to be established as statutory bodies, with each required to have a board as its governing body. These boards must comprise at least six members nominated by the minister and one person who is a hospital and health service board member. To ensure business continuity for foundations if a board member's successor has not been appointed by the end of the member's five-year term, the current member can continue to hold office until a successor is appointed.

The Hospitals Foundations Act has not undergone a substantial review since it was introduced in 1982. The language in the act is unclear in parts and does not reflect modern financial transactions. The bill addresses this by updating the drafting of provisions relating to financial transactions to provide foundations with the operational flexibility they need to manage their day-to-day operations and finances. The minister and Treasurer will maintain appropriate oversight of higher risk financial transactions.

The bill also gives the minister greater power where there are concerns about a foundation's governance or financial viability. Foundation boards must notify the minister of a matter that raises significant concern about a foundation's financial viability, administration or management. Regardless of whether a notice has been given, the minister may also request information or documents if the minister has a concern about the foundation's financial viability or its administration or management. In serious cases the minister may recommend that the Governor in Council remove all members of a foundation's board and appoint an administrator to manage the foundation. This power can only be exercised where it would be in the public interest to do so.

The bill also includes amendments to the Drugs Misuse Act 1986. The Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation recently agreed that hemp seed may be sold as food or used as an ingredient in a food for sale in Australia; however, the Drugs Misuse Act prohibits industrial cannabis being grown as food. Without amendments, Queensland industry will not be able to grow industrial cannabis seed for use in hemp seed foods and would instead need to import seed from interstate or overseas. Queensland's industrial cannabis industry is small and has traditionally focused on research into new varieties and fibre production; however, there is a large and growing global market for hemp seed foods. In recent years hemp based foods have emerged as superfoods in the health and wellness food category in North American and European markets. They are likely to attract similar interest in Australia. Hemp seeds come from the cannabis plant and they have extremely low levels of tetrahydrocannabinol, THC, which is the drug component of cannabis that causes psychoactive effects. Food Standards Australia New Zealand has recognised that low-THC hemp seed foods contain protein, dietary fibre and polyunsaturated fatty acids, particularly omega-3 fatty acids, which are recognised as being healthy. Hemp products come primarily as seeds, oils and protein powders. The amendments will open up the food export market to industry.

An August 2016 report from international technology research and advisory company Technavio estimated that the global market for hemp based foods was in the vicinity of \$215 million. They forecast growth at 20 per cent per annum during the 2016 to 2020 period. The amendments to the Drugs Misuse Act will ensure that Queensland can be part of this growth industry. The bill will simplify the licensing criteria for growers while tightening the regulatory control of researchers who can grow high-THC varieties. The bill will create a single type of researcher licence. People applying for a researcher licence will be required to submit a plan outlining proposed risk management strategies, including the supervision of contracted growers. The bill will allow licensed seed handlers to wholesale viable seed for making hemp seed foods. The seed handler licence will also replace the existing authorisation of denaturers and recognition of planting seed suppliers.

The amendments will also provide more flexible options for responding to breaches of the Drugs Misuse Act. Specific regulatory offences are provided for a breach of record keeping or notification requirements or a licence condition. Inspectors will be able to issue a compliance notice, and the bill will make it an offence to fail to comply with a compliance notice. The bill will also ensure that breach of a licence condition is a ground for cancelling or suspending a licence.

Queensland has a world-class public health system. Hospital foundations play an important role in supporting our public hospitals and health services, raising money to fund lifesaving research, buy equipment, support staff development opportunities and improve facilities. I pay tribute to the outstanding work that they do across Queensland. This bill will give foundations a modern, streamlined legislative framework within which they can continue their important work for the benefit of patients, staff and the Queensland community. I commend the bill to the House.

### **First Reading**

**Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (4.05 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

**Referral to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family  
Violence Prevention Committee**

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Elmes): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is referred to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee.