




Speech By
Barry O'Rourke

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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HOSPITAL FOUNDATIONS BILL

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (12.08 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Hospital Foundations Bill 2018. This bill was introduced into the previous parliament in August last year and reported on by the former Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee in October 2017. The bill lapsed when parliament was dissolved on 29 October 2017, prior to its second reading. The current version of the bill is substantially the same as the previous version, except for some minor amendments identified by the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel.

The committee had regard to the report of the former committee and information from the former committee, such as written advice from the Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, provided during public hearings. The former committee recommended clarification of two matters which the Department of Health has kindly done. I thank the department for their very helpful advice.

The bill proposes to repeal and replace the Hospitals Foundations Act 1982 to streamline the legislation, remove unnecessary prescription and ensure the legislation reflects hospital foundations' current operational practices, and amends the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 to enable industrial cannabis seeds to be grown for human consumption in Queensland. The explanatory notes to the bill state that hospital foundations and hospital and health services were given consultation drafts of the bill for comment and that hospital foundations were supportive of the bill. The explanatory notes also state that the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries held a forum with a range of industry stakeholders to discuss the proposed amendments to the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 and that stakeholders supported the proposed amendments.

I would like to acknowledge the great work of our health foundations throughout Queensland. The bill, more importantly, will give health foundations the ability to operate with increased flexibility in their local area. Also, I support amendments to the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 allowing the growth of industrial cannabis in Queensland. Some people suffering from chronic or terminal illness believe that conventional medicines do not work or do not work as effectively as medicinal cannabis. Also, for some patients conventional medicines may work but cause debilitating side effects that cannabis can help to relieve. Cannabis can also be described as a superfood. It has omega-3 and omega-6 in the right mix for the human body. It also has something like 20 amino acids in it, including nine essential oils for human development, and it is also really high in protein.

Given Queensland's tropical climate, the growing of industrial cannabis would be extremely useful for our farmers and would create jobs. It was not just those in the health and food industries who welcomed the change. Cannabis is a good rotational crop between seasons. It is fast growing, uses little water and even helps with land management. Cannabis is a very aggressive summer crop. The shady nature of the plants help enormously with weed resistance and thus using less or no chemicals. It has a very aggressive rooting structure and that again helps to break up the subsoil and improve the soil quality. Finally, from an irrigation point of view, water use efficiency is incredibly good for this crop. The committee recommends that the bill be passed, and I commend the bill to the House.