




Speech By
Cynthia Lui

MEMBER FOR COOK

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HOSPITAL FOUNDATIONS BILL

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (12.22 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Hospital Foundations Bill 2018. The bill repeals and replaces the Hospitals Foundations Act 1982 that will provide for the establishment, administration and oversight of entities to hold and manage property for particular objects to benefit public health in Queensland. The bill also amends the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 to enable appropriate further development of the industrial cannabis industry following a national decision to allow low-tetrahydrocannabinol hempseed and seed products to be sold as food.

The current act has not been substantially updated since it was introduced in the early 1980s. In this ever-advancing society, it is important that the legislative framework for foundations reflects their current work and operational needs. The Hospital Foundations Bill 2018 streamlines governing and operational provisions for foundations to ensure they reflect contemporary practices including provisions relating to financial transactions. This will provide foundations with more flexibility to manage their operations and finances. The new legislative framework will be easier to understand and apply in practice, ensuring hospital foundations can continue to focus on their important work supporting Queensland's public health system.

Hospital foundations support Queensland's world-class public health system, funding initiatives like new and improved facilities, state-of-the-art medical equipment, training and development opportunities for staff and lifesaving medical research. Last financial year foundations raised over \$74 million for our public hospital and health services. There are 13 foundations across the state, run almost entirely by dedicated volunteers who do great work raising money for our hospitals to the benefit of patients, staff, families, carers and communities.

I recently had the privilege of meeting with Robyn Boundy in Mareeba in my electorate and acknowledge Ida Portella, the chair of the Mareeba friends of the hospital foundation. Mareeba Hospital has been friends of the hospital foundation for six years. The hospital foundation is based in Cairns and allows Mareeba to use their branding and insurance. Robyn told me of the amazing work of the hospital foundation to successfully raise funds according to the hospital's wish list. Due to this relationship, to date \$500,000 has been raised for Mareeba Hospital which funded TVs for all beds that have nurse assist buttons; a covered playground for the paediatric area; probes that go on ultrasound machines; chairs that can be converted to beds for family and friends to stay with patients overnight; a controlled passive movement machine used by physios for rehabilitation; breast pumps for the maternity ward; and A&E equipment. They are currently working on funding for a purpose-built kitchen for patients undergoing rehabilitation.

As I make my way around our hospitals and health facilities, there is one thing that is obvious to me: no matter where we are, every community we visit has its own special connection with its health facility. The physical location where health care is delivered to a community and the people who provide that care become part of the very fabric of the community, and there is probably no greater example than Mareeba. We certainly know how passionate this community is about this hospital. It is a well-acknowledged fact that our facilities in the far north owe so much to the fundraising efforts of the

foundation and to the friends of the hospital. From speaking with our volunteers, I know that they all have their own special stories about what has led them to be involved—associations borne out of personal connections and sometimes years of involvement with our health facilities. The simple truth of the matter is that our hospitals would not be what they are today without that support.

I would like to acknowledge the work of foundations across Queensland, particularly in my neighbouring electorate of Cairns. In 2017 the foundation announced it would contribute \$1.4 million towards a second cardiac catheter laboratory at Cairns Hospital, matching \$1.4 million in state government funding for the facility. The foundation raised the funds through a fundraising cardiac challenge, cycling events and donations from the local community. The second cardiac catheter laboratory will allow the cardiac team at Cairns Hospital to perform ablations of abnormal heart rhythms rather than send those patients to Townsville or Brisbane. They will also be able to perform life-saving implantable defibrillators into people who need them, saving them having to go to Townsville or Brisbane.

I would like to acknowledge the many volunteers and the very important role they play in raising valuable funds to not only assist our public health system but also help the many men, women and children who rely on the public health system for quality health care. The foundations work closely with their local communities to deliver better public health outcomes. The dedicated work they undertake to raise funds is driven largely by volunteer local community members. In 2016-17 foundations reported a total full-time-equivalent staff of over 180 and a volunteer workforce estimated at over 4,000 people. The foundations' work has the associated benefit of positively promoting the high standards of care and health services delivered within the public health system. The important role of foundations in delivering outcomes for the health of Queenslanders requires a legislative framework that reflects their work and current operational needs.

The bill also includes amendments to the Drugs Misuse Act 1986. In November 2017 the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code was amended to permit some hempseeds to be sold as food or used as an ingredient in a food for sale in Australia. This change followed a comprehensive review of the safety of hempseed foods by Food Standards Australia New Zealand and was endorsed by all Australian ministers responsible for food regulation. Food Standards Australia New Zealand found that low-THC hempseed foods contain protein, dietary fibre and polyunsaturated fatty acids, particularly omega-3 fatty acids, which are recognised as being healthy. However, the Drugs Misuse Act currently prohibits industrial cannabis being grown for food.

Without amendment to this act, the Queensland industry will not be able to grow industrial cannabis seed for use in hempseed foods and would instead need to import seed from interstate or overseas. The amendments in the bill not only align Queensland with the legislation of most other Australian jurisdictions, including New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, but also allow the Queensland industry to have access to the food export market.

Debate, on motion of Ms Lui, adjourned.

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (12.55 pm), continuing: The amendments in the bill not only align Queensland with the legislation of most other Australian jurisdictions including New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia but also allow Queensland industry to have access to the food export market. Hemp based foods are a growing industry, and the amendments in this bill will allow Queensland to be part of this growth industry.

The amendments in the bill will also tighten the regulatory control of researchers, as they can grow high-THC varieties of cannabis by requiring applicants for a researcher licence to submit a plan outlining proposed risk management strategies, including the supervision of contracted growers. The two existing categories of researcher licence will be replaced with a single researcher licence. The amendments also provide more flexible options for responding to breaches of the Drugs Misuse Act, including specific regulatory offences for a breach of recordkeeping, notification requirements or a licence condition. The bill will make it an offence to fail to comply with a compliance notice issued by inspectors, and breach of a licence condition is grounds for cancelling or suspending a licence.

In closing, I would like to thank the committee for its consideration of the bill to date. I commend the bill to the House as amended.