




Speech By
Joan Pease

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

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HOSPITAL FOUNDATIONS BILL

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (11.54 am): I rise to speak on the Hospital Foundations Bill 2018. I thank the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services for introducing the bill to this parliament. I also thank the chair of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee, the member for Thuringowa, and my fellow committee members for their consideration of the bill. I thank those who lodged written submissions on the bill and, of course, the committee secretariat. The only recommendation that the committee made was that the bill be supported. Therefore, it is interesting that the member for Caloundra stands here today and criticises the bill, given that these matters were not canvassed during the perusal of the bill.

The member for Thuringowa spoke very glowingly of the hospital foundation in his electorate, and all members of this House with a hospital board in their electorates speak very highly of them. The member for Caloundra talked about the makeup of the boards. In Townsville, for example, the foundation membership includes a registered nurse and Dr Matthew Bryant, the Director of the North Queensland Persistent Pain Management Service, as well as other health professionals. These changes will not preclude people with a medical background from being a member of a board.

I recognise the hard work of the former Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee of the 55th Parliament in examining this bill. Their endeavours gave our committee an excellent platform on which to work.

As I have already said, hospitals are a fundamental institution in Queensland communities. Throughout my time as a member of parliament, I have heard countless stories about how hospitals have supported families and friends during some of the most difficult times in their lives. I have heard stories of the contributions that they make to support local foundations. Like many members here, I have personal experience of different hospitals and I acknowledge the great work that our local hospitals and their staff do in supporting families.

Hospital foundations play an important role in supporting hospitals and improvements to the public health system by raising funds to purchase medical equipment, upgrade health service facilities, support educational and training opportunities for staff, and medical research. Across the state 13 foundations, run almost entirely by volunteers, go to great lengths to raise money for the benefit of individuals, families, hospital staff, local communities and the greater Queensland community. In fact, in the 2016-17 financial year, foundations collectively reported income raised of over \$74 million. Other members have mentioned that outstanding figure, which shows just how integral the foundations are in supporting our Queensland hospitals.

This bill was introduced in response to the outdated legislation regarding these important institutions, which have not undergone a substantial review since their introduction in the 1980s. The objective of the bill is to repeal and replace the Hospitals Foundations Act 1982, to streamline the legislation, to remove unnecessary prescription and to ensure the legislation reflects the current operational practices of hospital foundations. The bill also amends the Drugs Misuse Act 1984 to enable

industrial cannabis seeds to be grown for human consumption in Queensland. The bill supports and improves Queensland public health systems by providing for the objects for which foundations may hold and manage property; the detailed outline of a foundation's powers, with a number of powers requiring the minister's approval; the establishment of foundations and boards for foundations; and matters relating to the administration and oversight of foundations.

Under the bill, foundations will continue to be established as body corporates. The board membership must comprise at least seven members—six members recommended by the minister and one person who is a hospital and health service board member. However, it does not mention anywhere that health professionals are precluded from being members. The bill removes the specific membership requirement in the current act and, instead, provides that, when nominating members to the board, the minister may have regard to whether the person has a significant understanding of legislation applying to foundations and the skills, experience or expertise the minister considers relevant or necessary to support the board in performing its functions. The bill also includes new powers to ensure that the minister has appropriate oversight where there are concerns about a foundation's governance or financial viability.

The board is required to give the minister written notice of a matter that raises a significant concern about the foundation's financial viability or their administration or management. Regardless of whether the board has given the minister notice about a matter of significant concern, the minister may ask the board to give information or documents relating to the board's functions under the bill.

As I have already said, the bill introduces amendments to the Drugs Misuse Act 1986. An amendment to the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, which took effect on 12 November 2017, allows for the sale of low-THC hempseed foods in Queensland. However, without amendments to the Drugs Misuse Act all industrial cannabis seeds used in hempseed foods in Queensland must be imported from interstate or overseas.

Due to the increasing popularity of foods made from hempseeds, which are grown by the cannabis plant, the production of hempseed foods will be legalised in Queensland. This aligns Queensland with other Australian jurisdictions and ensures that Queensland businesses can participate in this growing market, instead of purchasing the product from overseas or interstate. This will again create the opportunity for new industries in Queensland and create more jobs for Queenslanders.

This bill recognises the importance of ensuring that the legislative framework around the hospital boards reflects their current work and operational needs so that they can continue to service our community and support Queensland's public health system. It also supports local Queensland businesses by ensuring they can participate in a growing new market and industry. I commend the bill to the House.