




Speech By  
**Julieanne Gilbert**

**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

---

Record of Proceedings, 21 March 2018

**HOSPITAL FOUNDATIONS BILL**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (3.26 pm): It gives me immense pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak on this bill because my community of Mackay has one of the hospital foundations. Volunteering undertaken at the Mackay Hospital Foundation raises vital funds so that they can donate equipment and services and aid the recovery of patients. The Mackay Hospital Foundation volunteers are the kind face that you see when you walk into the hospital. They greet patients and visitors, and they also give directions and information. It just makes it a nicer place to be in. The Mackay Hospital Foundation makes an enormous difference to the experience that patients and their families have at a very distressing point in their lives.

I was honoured to be invited to open the brand-new gift shop at the Mackay Base Hospital as one of my first official duties as a newly elected member of parliament in the last government. It was great to see how the Mackay Hospital Foundation had set up this brand-new gift shop. Staffed solely by volunteers, the shop was stocked full of gift items for patients and new baby arrivals. It also had a large range of toiletries for the ease and comfort of those patients who did not have families and friends around them to bring them basic items. This is very important in a place like Mackay where we have a lot of FIFO workers coming and going and also a lot of tourists. They do not have people at hand to bring them items if they suddenly become unwell.

The Mackay Hospital Foundation has a lot of varied services, all solely carried out by volunteers. Some of these services include the operation of vending machines not only in the Mackay hospital but also in our rural facilities. The Mackay HHS covers from Bowen out to Clermont and everything in between so the work that they do is vast. They also have a wheelchair service and they do small administration jobs to help out the nursing staff, like stuffing envelopes and laminating, because they believe the nurses should be left to do the job of nursing. They operate a daily trolley service delivering free newspapers to keep patients connected with the outside world. They also have a selection of drinks and chocolates for purchase.

They run a daily playgroup for children in the children's ward, they entertain the patients and they also allow the siblings of patients to join in to give parents and caregivers a break. The volunteers are the friendly faces in the oncology ward and also at breast screening. They offer patients some care and hope as they receive treatment. They also raise funds to improve services at the hospitals. Tracey Byron told me that they like to fill the gaps of government funded services to make it just a little bit more comfortable. It is a shame that the member for Surfers Paradise was not calling today for the federal government to pay hospitals like the Mackay HHS for services they have already delivered instead of making excuses for them.

In more recent years the Mackay Hospital Foundation have purchased televisions, chairs for ICU and physiotherapy units, a draft shuttle to transport neonatal babies that need treatment and a supine bike that can be pedalled in bed, which helps in the patients' recovery physiotherapy. They have also purchased blanket warmers. The foundation is fortunate to have long-term volunteers who give their

time to the hospital foundation. They were doing this even before it was a formal foundation. These volunteers include Lavern White, who started volunteering in 1989, and Bill and Greta Thomas, who have been volunteering since 1981 and are still continuing their service.

The Mackay Hospital Foundation is one of 13 foundations in Queensland that have worked tirelessly to support their local hospitals, collectively raising \$74 million. This bill will repeal and replace the Hospitals Foundations Act 1982. The act is unnecessarily prescriptive, inconsistent with contemporary drafting standards and does not adequately reflect the needs of foundations.

The bill continues to provide for foundations to be established as bodies corporate. The Hospitals Foundations Act provides for the body corporate to comprise members but does not expressly establish a board for the foundation. The bill makes it clear that the governing body of the foundation is the foundation's board. The functions of the board are to: manage the foundations generally; ensure the foundation achieves its registered objectives effectively and efficiently; sets out strategies and policies for the property managed by the foundation; and any other function given to it under the bill or legislation.

The bill also amends the Drugs Misuse Act 1986. The Drugs Misuse Act currently only allows for commercial industrial cannabis production for fibre, and seed production in Queensland is licensed under the Drugs Misuse Act. The Drugs Misuse Act currently does not allow for the production of industrial cannabis seeds for human consumption.

Without amendment to the act, Queensland will not be able to produce seeds in Queensland allowable under the amendment to the Australian and New Zealand Food Standards Code, which took effect on 12 November 2017, allowing for the sale of low-THC hempseed foods in Queensland. Without this amendment, Queensland would need to import industrial cannabis seeds used in hempseed foods in Queensland from interstate or overseas. The industry will be able to grow low concentrations of the psychoactive component of the THC and, therefore, have low value as a recreational drug. There is an opportunity to develop a commercially led industrial cannabis industry.

This bill will replace the current authorisation of seed denatures and seed suppliers with a seed handler's licence. The requirements for seed handlers are simplified through the bill. I support the mental health amendments flagged by the minister in his second reading speech. This bill makes sense. I commend it to the House.