




Speech By
Michael Healy

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

Record of Proceedings, 21 March 2018

HOSPITAL FOUNDATIONS BILL

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (3.39 pm): Before I begin, Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to acknowledge your contribution: getting your head shaved for a worthy cause. My wife was diagnosed with leukaemia some years ago and it was an enormous challenge, so I recognise the contribution that you have made. May I say, what a lovely cranium you have!

The Hospital Foundations Bill 2018 provides a legislative framework for the establishment and operation of hospital foundations. The bill repeals and replaces the existing Hospitals Foundations Act 1982 with contemporary legislation. The main purpose of the bill is to establish a legislative framework under which entities may support and improve the public health system in Queensland. This purpose is primarily achieved by providing for: the objects for which foundations may hold and manage property; the establishment of foundations and boards for foundations; and matters relating to the administration and oversight of foundations and boards for foundations.

These are pretty fundamental changes to organisations which are key. We have heard there are 13 areas, and I can speak for the ones in Far North Queensland which I will talk a little bit about in a minute. These changes reflect the first significant changes to the legislation since it was introduced to the House. These amendments reflect current practices and, very importantly, they also provide flexibility at a local level. There are a couple of notable things.

Firstly, the charitable status of foundations by registration with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission will not be impacted by this bill. I think that is well worth noting. Under the act the minister has limited powers available to address circumstances where a foundation experiences financial or other difficulties. The bill provides the minister with greater visibility where there are concerns about the governance or financial viability of a foundation. The bill also requires foundations to notify the minister in writing immediately after becoming aware of a matter that raises significant concern regarding the foundation's financial viability or governance. As I have said before, these are sound and important changes that need to be made.

The amendments will also open up the food export market to create a new industry, and this has been touched on by members on both sides of this chamber. An August 2016 report from the international technology research and advisory company Technavio estimated the global market size of hemp based foods at \$215.8 million, with growth forecast at around 20 per cent annually during the 2016 to 2020 period. There are foundations for an industry here and there are very real opportunities.

The bill amends the Drugs Misuse Act to also enable the seeds to be grown for human consumption. The bill includes appropriate measures to reduce the risk of diversion or lawful dealings with industrial cannabis seed being used as a front for marketing high-THC varieties. The Drugs Misuse Act already allows industrial cannabis to be grown for fibre and seed. The changes will bring Queensland into line with the approaches and the laws of New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and, just as importantly, South Australia.

The bill also addresses some pre-existing issues with the Drugs Misuse Act; for example, it tightens regulatory control over researchers who can grow high-THC varieties by requiring applicants for a researcher licence to submit a plan outlining proposed risk management strategies, including the supervision of contracted growers. The bill also provides for more flexible options for responding to breaches of the Drugs Misuse Act.

One of the important things about the hospital foundation is its community engagement, and this is where I will talk about the facility that we have in Cairns. The Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation has raised \$15 million in 20 years. It is an essential organisation. The community can certainly embrace the challenges that our hospitals face and contribute to resolving them. It is a very important organisation and it has ingratiated itself throughout the fabric of our community. I recognise Dr Ken Chapman, the chairman and all of the members there: Patricia Bailey, Steve Russell, Desley Boyle—who served in this chamber for number of years—Professor John McBride; John Andrejic; Clare Douglas; Ali Davenport; Dr Edward Strivens; and Jodi Peters. Each one of those people, including previous members of the board, have made outstanding contributions.

I would like to touch on a couple of areas that I think are important: \$1.4 million was raised for a second cardiac catheter laboratory in Cairns Hospital. The Far North Queensland community raised \$1.4 million towards a second laboratory at Cairns Hospital. Funds were initially raised through the Mount Franklin Cardiac Challenge bike ride from Cairns to Cooktown, and I believe this is an annual event. I encourage all members of the chamber to come up to Cairns, relax and go for a bike ride. They are more than welcome. I think it is a couple of hundred kilometres. Looking around, some of us could use it.

An honourable member: That's harsh!

Mr HEALY: It is a harsh world that we live in, but I do this purely with regard to health and I am thinking of everyone's best interests. The project is on track to be completed by 2018. It will mean that fewer patients have to travel to Brisbane and Townsville. That is one of the beauties of this organisation, because we in Cairns do not have to go south for treatment. That is no different to what my wife had to go through when she did not have to leave Cairns for her treatment.

We also have a paediatric playground for which \$1,285,000 was raised. Our paediatric playground opened in time for Christmas 2015. It is a state-of-the-art playground, and it was built adjacent to the children's ward at Cairns Hospital in conjunction with the hospital redevelopment. The playground benefits the entire family. Patients have access to a new all-weather playground designed to maximise rehabilitation, education and having fun.

We also have a PET-CT scanner thanks to a \$700,000 contribution from the foundation. Construction of the facility to house the PET-CT scanner began in March 2015. This is a huge milestone for our health services. It will ensure that patients will not need to travel to receive this service now that the machine is operational. As a foundation they are extremely proud to make a continual contribution to services in our region and I, as their elected member, cannot support them strongly enough.

We also have an integrated patient system. The contribution of the foundation in this regard was \$1.6 million. As part of the Cairns Hospital redevelopment the foundation contributed \$1.6 million—which is their single biggest spend to date—towards the latest innovations in patient entertainment systems. The new systems enable patients to access free-to-air television and radio as well as their personalised healthcare plan.

The importance of this is fundamental to our community, particularly in regional areas. I would like to recognise the hard work of those on the committee towards building stronger communities. This is one of those organisations that contributes to a stronger community. I would like to recognise the committee's hard work and thank all members of the chamber who participated in that. I commend the bill to the House.