



Speech By  
**Aaron Harper**


**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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**MEDICINES AND POISONS BILL**

**THERAPEUTIC GOODS BILL**

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (5.10 pm): I rise to speak in the cognate debate of the Medicines and Poisons Bill 2019 and the Therapeutic Goods Bill 2019. The previous speaker spoke about the LNP having an ice detox centre. I welcome the member and his opposition colleagues to visit the Salvation Army—

**Ms Bates** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** I thank the member for Mudgeeraba. They have 45 beds and a detox centre, which our government has proudly funded to the tune of a million dollars. I thank the member for going along and seeing that. They do an excellent job.

I thank the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee, particularly the chair, the member for Murrumba. This is not work commonly given to the state development committee, but the health committee's current workload is exceptionally high. We thank the state development committee for its hard work in inquiring into these bills. They are important pieces of legislation.

In Queensland, medicines and poisons are currently regulated by the Health Act 1937 and the health regulation 1996. The Health Act is one of the oldest acts in Queensland's statute book. Given the amendments and changes that have occurred over the past 82 years, the current framework is almost entirely contained in subordinate legislation. This act has been on the books since before any of the current serving MPs were born. A few things happened in 1937. The Golden Gate Bridge was opened, *The Hobbit* was published, the UK started its 999 telephone service, Joseph Lyons was the Australian Prime Minister and William Forgan Smith was the Queensland Premier. This act has got to a point where it needs to be modernised and streamlined. As chair of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee, I am keenly aware that this has been a long-term project for our government and for a dedicated team within Queensland Health. I particularly thank them for their work.

In addition to the Health Act 1937, the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996 regulates the possession, supply, administration and other activities related to the medicines and poisons in the Commonwealth poisons standard. The health regulation 1996 provides controls for manufacturing, advertising and labelling of substances and sets out requirements for pharmacy dispensing.

The bill will repeal the current legislation and replace it with a new regulatory framework which consists of the Medicines and Poisons Bill 2019, the Therapeutic Goods Bill 2019, the draft medicines and poisons regulations and the draft Therapeutic Goods Regulation. The explanatory notes state—

A new regulatory framework is needed to modernise and streamline the regulation of medicines and poisons, ensuring requirements are easier for industry and the community to understand and apply in practice.

Additionally, it is stated that the new regulatory framework will be focused on outcomes instead of being overly prescriptive and will enhance public safety. Dr Jeannette Young, our Chief Health Officer, advised the committee during its deliberations that the purposes of the new framework are: to ensure that medicines and poisons are made, sold, used and disposed of in an appropriate, effective and safe way; to ensure health risks arising from the use of substances are appropriately managed; and to ensure persons who are authorised to carry out activities using the substances have the necessary competencies to do so safely.

The bill covers a diverse range of industries including health care, agriculture, pest management, pharmaceutical and chemical manufacturing, and research and analysis. This means that a broad spectrum of industries and communities will benefit from the bill, which modernises the regulation of medicines and poisons, ensuring it is easier for industry to understand and apply in practice. For example, a wholesaler with multiple sites will require only one wholesaling licence rather than a licence for each site.

Another important reform is the introduction of real-time prescription monitoring. That is something I am very interested in in the aged-care sector. The database established under the bill will monitor prescription information related to high-risk medications such as pharmaceutical opioids and other prescription-only medicines associated with abuse and drug seeking—for example, sedatives, sleeping tablets and products that combine codeine with other medicine. This will provide pharmacists with access to real-time information before they prescribe or dispense certain medicines at the time of consultation. The reform means that we are putting information in the hands of our pharmacists so that they can identify patients who may be at risk of harm due to drug dependence or high-risk use of certain prescription medicines.

Real-time monitoring in Queensland will ensure prescribed medicines are provided safely to all Queenslanders. Establishing a system of real-time monitoring in Queensland also delivers on a commitment made by the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services—a good minister of the Labor government—to the COAG Health Council in April 2018. I am so pleased to see his introduction today of the bill relating to aged care. I am also pleased to see that the introduction of real-time monitoring is supported by the AMA Queensland, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Pharmacy Guild and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia.

The bill will also build on this government's record of improving pathways for sick Queensland patients to access medicinal cannabis. This joins some of the most progressive laws in the country—yet another bill that the health committee helped pass through this place. This bill streamlines the regulatory framework for prescribing medicinal cannabis in Queensland by enabling non-specialist GPs to prescribe medicinal cannabis without the need for approval from Queensland Health. This is a good thing. It eliminates duplication with the Commonwealth approval process and removes the potential for Queensland Health and the TGA to reach different conclusions about applications for access for eligible Queenslanders. This means that medicinal cannabis will now be treated just like any other therapeutic treatment. It will also make the system for prescribing much easier for GPs, as they know the system and they now have just one system to use.

I am pleased to see that the Therapeutic Goods Bill also streamlines our health regulatory framework and brings our state into line with the Commonwealth and other states and territories. Due to constitutional limitations, the Commonwealth Therapeutic Goods Act applies to corporations and persons trading interstate and internationally. This means that it does not apply to sole traders or partnerships that only engage and trade within Queensland. The Therapeutic Goods Act is an important law in protecting consumers from potentially unsafe therapeutic goods such as herbal medicines or vitamin supplements.

The bill will extend the application of the Commonwealth Therapeutic Goods Act to those who trade only within Queensland. This means that for all goods sold by those who trade only in Queensland the quality, safety, efficacy and timely availability of therapeutic goods will now be regulated consistently with all other manufacturers. This will ensure we pick up potential safety issues for people purchasing therapeutic goods where these products would have previously not been assessed by the TGA. Applying the Commonwealth act in Queensland will provide certainty and competitive fairness for medicines manufacturers and ensure that all therapeutic goods are manufactured to the same high standard. This is a good bill for Queensland. This is a good bill introduced by the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. I commend the bills to the House.