



Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

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HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.00 pm): I speak in support of the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and oppose the amendment put by the Manager of Opposition Business. I will restrict myself to just a few clauses. I was a member of the select committee which looked into coal workers' pneumoconiosis. During that committee process we found evidence that some people had presented at both public and private hospitals with dust related diseases over a considerable period of time but this had not triggered any particular remedial action. I am pleased to see that the amendments and recommendations from the committee have been picked up and are being enacted.

In a normal notifiable disease situation—something like an infectious disease, for example—when a disease is notified to the health department a whole range of measures are taken to try to contain and control that disease. That is not necessarily the purpose in this case. If a person is identified with pneumoconiosis, they may well, as is very common in the industry, have worked over nine or 10 different mines over their career so there is no way for health professionals and the health department to identify which particular mine may have caused their pneumoconiosis, but what it does do is give us data and information on that. If we had been doing this 15 to 20 years ago, we might have started this entire process much quicker. I am pleased that many of the other recommendations which the minister has taken on board and is implementing are designed to make all coalmines safe and all workers who deal with the handling of coal safer.

I want to turn to the amendments that deal with the power to issue pollution notices. I think this is to be welcomed. We live in a world where there is a whole range of chemicals and other materials used that can have impacts on people, and these amendments put obligations on people that when something goes wrong we have to notify the community and public health providers so we can respond to that in an appropriate manner. Clearly this will result in much better outcomes for our entire community.

I support all of the amendments in the bill that improve research arrangements, particularly for children with cancer. Having been a nurse for just over 30 years, I have seen cancer rates for children plummet and survival rates increase, which is down to research. Anything we can do to make that better, we should.

I will now turn to the retirement villages portion of the act. It is certainly something that I am interested in. I spoke yesterday in the House about the benefits that retirement villages have brought to my local community. Both my mother-in-law and my mother reside in retirement villages. I also have a professional interest in retirement villages, and I utterly reject the notion that retirement villages have no relevance to the health system. As a nurse, I spent my time encouraging people to move to appropriate accommodation. When we have people who come into a hospital, particularly in a rehabilitation unit, and they are from their own home, discharging them is more complicated than somebody who has moved into a retirement village where we have age appropriate accommodation. I think retirement villages are an incredibly important link in the health system. They help people to stay in their homes longer and to be healthier and live happier lives. To suggest that they have no relevance to health I think is completely and utterly false.

I know from dealing with my own mother and my mother-in-law that, if they leave their retirement villages, it is likely that they will be heading off to a nursing home or be deceased. Anyone going into a nursing home wants to be able to liquidate their asset quickly and get access to those funds. There have been several speakers who have suggested that these amendments would interfere with the market. I would contend that the market in this area is already interfered with, because you do not have the conditions of a perfect market in this situation.

Just yesterday I was talking to some constituents who have a parent who is living in a retirement village. The village operator has chosen to build at least five new buildings—and I will not say where that is; it is not in my electorate—but the village operator is choosing to sell the newer units before the older units which people are moving out of and they are seeing delays for their relative in terms of being able to sell their property. In that particular case—and I have seen many other examples—the market is far from perfect in that area.

This legislation was inspired by the ‘bleed them dry until they die’ *Four Corners* report. That is a report that should encourage anybody who cares about people who live in retirement villages to take action. I commend the minister for taking action with the Housing Legislation (Building Better Futures) Amendment Act, which was a great response to that. It creates new standards for operators and residents. Look at the list of people who support this legislation—the Association of Residents of Queensland Retirement Villages, the Caxton Legal Centre, National Seniors and Tenants Queensland. The only uncertainty that I can see is being created by the Property Council of Queensland and the LNP.

It was always the intent to cover the entire industry to provide fairness and security for Queenslanders who have put not just their money but also their faith in these forms of accommodation. As I have said, these forms of accommodation, in my opinion, assist people to live longer, happier and healthier lives. There are protections in place—the protection of being able to use a reasonable excuse and apply for extensions from QCAT. There are also provisions for dealing with disagreements over value.

I want to use a few more moments to oppose the amendment that was put forward. I note that the deputy chair understands the issues well enough to write a statement of reservation in relation to this bill. The notion that this bill has not been properly consulted on and that the issues are beyond the comprehension of the LNP should be put to the side. The deputy chair was well able to write a well-articulated statement of reservation. This is just another typical LNP game. If those opposite wonder why they are sitting on the opposition benches, have a look at this amendment. It should give a clue as to why they are sitting on the opposition benches. Those opposite come in here and whinge about the length of time they have for debate and then we listen to 30 of them at least on every debate stand up and read out verbatim the same speech. Those opposite talk about their voices not being heard—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Weir): Order! Silence! The member has the call. I do not want to hear an outburst like that again.

Mr KELLY: They talk at length about not having the time for debate and then we hear 30 speeches which repeat the same thing over and over again. Those opposite demand the right to be heard and then they do not bother to use the right to be heard. Omnibus bills are standard fare. I wish I had time to go back through the Newman government’s legislative record and work out how many omnibus bills had been presented to this House.

Retirement villages are part of the health system. This has a part in this bill. This amendment should be rejected. It is nothing more than a tired LNP game. This is why the people of Queensland keep rejecting the LNP, why they continue to stay on that side of the House and why they waste their time saying the same things over and over again instead of coming up with new ideas—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member, I would ask you to come back to the long title of the bill to conclude your contribution.

Mr KELLY: I continue to debate the amendment to the long title of the bill. I have almost concluded my remarks. I would like to finish by saying that this amendment that has been put should be utterly rejected by this House. Part 9 of the bill is utterly relevant to the rest of the bill. I commend the bill to the House.