




Speech By
Cynthia Lui

MEMBER FOR COOK

Record of Proceedings, 13 August 2020

HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (3.46 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. The Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 amends five health portfolio acts and two regulations to implement policy initiatives and to improve the effective operation of the acts. Critically, the bill amends the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 to strengthen networked governance in Queensland's public health system and to strengthen health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and the Public Health Act 2005 to prohibit health service providers from performing conversion therapy in Queensland.

This bill speaks volumes of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to Queenslanders in making significant reforms to health legislation to improve and protect the health of Queenslanders. These changes will enable the public health system to be more inclusive of diversity, to strengthen its governance structure and to prohibit barbaric laws that discriminate against a person's sexuality and/or gender identity.

I commend the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health, the Hon. Steven Miles, for his strong leadership throughout this term in his role as the Minister for Health and for his ongoing commitment and passion to make a positive difference to people's health and wellbeing into the future. I want to put on record today my thanks to the minister for all his hard work and unwavering support for the Cook electorate to ensure that people have access to quality health care no matter where they live.

The Health Legislation Amendment Bill was introduced into the Queensland parliament and referred to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee for their consideration and examination of the bill. The committee received an overwhelming response in its call for public submissions. The committee accepted 152 written submissions, with a further 15 received after the closing date. The bill strengthens networked governance in Queensland's public health system by amending the Hospital and Health Boards Act: requiring hospital and health services to have regard to the effective and efficient use of resources for the public sector health system as a whole and the best interests of patients and other users of health services throughout Queensland; and recognising hospital and health services and the Queensland Ambulance Service have mutual obligations to collaborate.

The bill strengthens the commitment to health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by amending the Hospital and Health Boards Act to include, as a guiding principle, a commitment to achieving health equity and delivery of responsive, capable and culturally competent health care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; to require each hospital and health service to have a strategy for achieving health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and to require each hospital and health board to have one or more Aboriginal persons as members. I would like to echo the sentiment of the minister in his introductory speech to this bill, stating—

This government is committed to making sustainable changes in health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and ensuring they have a seat at the table at the highest levels of governance.

As a First Nation woman and a member of the Palaszczuk government, this makes me feel extremely proud to represent a government committed to giving visibility to First Nation people and acknowledging the ongoing importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health as a government priority.

The bill also prohibits conversion therapy by creating an offence under the Public Health Act for health service providers to perform conversion therapy. On 28 November 2018, the Minister for Health convened an Ending Sexual Orientation Conversion Therapy Roundtable meeting and concluded that the government should consider legislation making it an offence for health practitioners to perform conversion therapy.

The committee heard that conversion therapy is a treatment or practice that attempts to change or suppress a person's sexual orientation or gender identity and that therapy practices continue to exist in Australia today, with around 10 organisations known to still be operating, leaving significant long-lasting trauma and mental health impacts on individuals. I support a world that is fair and where all people are treated equally. I support the prohibition of conversion therapy so that all people can live together in a society that is equal and accepting of each other.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee; the chair, Aaron Harper; the committee secretariat; and all of the committee members for their hard work and input into this very important health reform. I commend this bill to the House.