




Speech By
Joan Pease

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

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HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (11.58 am): I rise in support of the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. Like my colleagues, I want to take the opportunity to thank and acknowledge the many members of my community and all the communities across Queensland who have stepped up during COVID-19. We acknowledge the great work that frontline workers have done putting themselves at risk while protecting everyone as we are all confronting COVID-19 together.

I would also like to acknowledge our hotel quarantine workers, the contact tracers, the testers, the people who did the vaccinations and also not to forget the many people in the backrooms doing the coordinating. They made the rosters and did the preparation, planning and background work. That in itself would have been a huge trial and a big job. I really want to acknowledge the great administrative work that went on in the backend of that. I want to thank them on behalf of my community and myself. Their dedication, commitment and professionalism have ensured the safety and health of Queenslanders. We are forever in their debt for everything they have done.

I would also like to acknowledge the great work of the Minister for Health, the former health minister, the Premier and all of the other ministers who have worked together collaboratively to ensure that Queenslanders were given the best opportunity to confront and fight united COVID-19. That includes all of the staff who work for those people as well. They put in untold hours. I know personally that they were always available to answer an urgent call or to offer assistance or advice. I really want to acknowledge all the great staffers who have really stepped up during these difficult times.

Like my colleague, the member for Bulimba, I also want to acknowledge all of the electorate office staff. Electorate offices are often the last place that people go to. I know my staff have done an exceptional job, ringing people, making contact with all of our constituents, to make sure they are well and safe and to inquire if there is anything that we can do to assist them.

My staff have shed many a tear talking to many of the elderly people in my electorate. For their genuine commitment and concern for my constituents, I want to put on record my deep thanks to Jo Jackson, who herself has had a bit of a health scare at the moment, for what she has done and for encouraging and supporting my newest electorate officer, Carly Ogborne, and training her into becoming as good an electorate officer as she.

I would also like to acknowledge the small businesses in my electorate and thank them for the great work that they have done in following the guidelines and making sure that their business and their staff were safe in the face of some very nasty campaigns that were going on in my electorate by anti-vaxxers that caused great grief to some of my local businesses. In particular, I would like to acknowledge Chocolate Elements which was a new business that started in my electorate during COVID. They work with an organisation that takes care of and supports returned service personnel. They were hounded by people and it was shameful. I acknowledge the great work that they have done. I am really proud of their dedication to looking after their staff, and their commitment to providing a really great quality product, I might add. If you need some good chocky, pop down to Wynnum. That is on offer.

This bill is the sort of thing that good governments do. We go through and look at things that need to be fixed and need to be attended to, unlike those opposite. Before I was elected, the Wynnum Manly area was punished by the Newman-Crisafulli government. So many of our public services were removed; so many of our public servants lost their jobs. That ripped the heart and soul out of my community because not only did people lose their jobs but also such important services were removed. It meant that small businesses suffered because people were not working and they did not have money to spend with our local traders.

It was really important to me that I listened to what the community wanted. I stood beside the Premier as we fought for many things. Our health service is an example and one of the many things that I fought for.

With regard to the Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit—and I know I have spoken about this and I will continue to speak about it because it was disgraceful—85 residents lost their homes. These were elderly, vulnerable people who were being taken care of by kind, caring, compassionate, local people. They were hardworking men and women who cared for our elderly and most vulnerable. With a stroke of a pen, the Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit was shut.

Ms Grace: I remember campaigning. It was disgusting.

Ms PEASE: That is right. Thank you, I will take that interjection. As a result, not all of those 85 people survived the move, sadly. Not only was the service closed but also the palliative care services that operated out of there. It was a sensational palliative care service. My parents had stayed at Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit and they benefitted from the love and care of the palliative care team.

In the inquiry that we are conducting at the moment, I get to hear about the palliative care services and how important it is for a holistic approach to our health care in the area. It is not just a one fit that works for everyone.

It was shameful, but we, as a government, have listened, and not just in my electorate; it is across Queensland. It is Queensland-wide. We listen to what our community wants. We listen to what they need. We fulfil those requirements because we listen to the experts.

I want to acknowledge the great work of our GPs and all of our allied health workers, including the pharmacies. To them it is not a job, it is a vocation. Every day I meet beautiful, caring, kind people who give up so much of themselves to caring for our community. Without those beautiful people, our health and our beautiful community would not be what it is today.

To every one of the nurses, the doctors, the physiotherapists, the podiatrists, the speech pathologists, I say thank you from the bottom of my heart for your dedication.

As a government, I am incredibly proud that we listen in order to make changes to ensure the best can be done to look after everyone in Queensland. This bill is doing that. We are addressing a number of areas that will make the job easier, more straightforward and much more practical.

I feel really blessed that we have such a strong workforce in the health service area and I am thankful that we were able to restore that after the Newman era because, as my colleagues have said, without those people back in the system, we would never have been able to conduct a united fight against COVID-19. These people are beautiful people and they deserve every recognition and accolade that I can possibly give.

I will continue to advocate for our health workers, our teachers and public sector workers because a state cannot operate without great public servants. I thank you for everything you have done and I look forward to hearing from the community and working with my Bayside community. Without a shadow of a doubt, I want to thank Baysiders for their contribution, for taking care of each other, getting vaccinated and looking after their neighbours. I commend the bill to the House.