




Speech By
Robbie Katter

MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

Record of Proceedings, 23 February 2022

HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (2.39 pm): I rise to make a relatively brief contribution to the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Having been a part of that committee, I thank the committee staff for their assistance in trying to do our best to review elements of this bill. I am going to go through a couple of recommendations made by the committee and add some commentary on behalf of the KAP.

The amendments to the Ambulance Service Act drew some attention. In the QAS and other emergency services, including the police, when people have to retire at 60 we often lose good people. Even if they are non-operational, they can add value. We have that experience in western and remote areas. Often something is better than nothing. Even people who do not have to retire have a desire to. We have a need out there. I think that could offer a lot of benefits to remote areas in the Traeger electorate and in other regional areas of Queensland.

The amendments to the Mental Health Act drew some attention. I am on the Mental Health Select Committee at the moment, and it turns the spotlight on a wide variety of issues in that space. Listening to the member for Lockyer, I express the same sentiment of concern with the application. We would recommend that we proceed with caution in the operation of the legislation.

The amendments I felt most strongly about are those that relate to the Termination of Pregnancy Act. The KAP has made its strong philosophical position on this issue very clear. We consider ourselves uncompromising when it comes to anything to do with this issue. The committee has recommended that the minister provide more detail. Conscientious objection is the issue as we see it—that is, the objection for reasons of conscience to comply with that particular requirement. That is the issue we see that is invoked here with students being forced to operate. I would almost go so far as to say that we find it abhorrent that students would be forced into doing that. That raises all kinds of issues. We desperately want students to get into medicine. If it does not suit them to do that through their training, that creates a problem. Like I said, we have a strong philosophical opposition to anything of the sort.

Even if the minister gave an explanation that was satisfactory to many, I would say that the government has shown its true colours on this issue. When the whole abortion debate was going on in parliament, it was made very clear by the government—whether it was in public hospitals or private hospitals—that there was no latitude allowed on this issue. I expect that the same sort of attitude would apply to students when they are doing their training. There is zero trust from our end on there being enough latitude provided to students who want to choose to not participate in this sort of activity. That is a strong point for us and we will be seeking to vote against it in the passage of the bill. I want to put on record our strong objection to that.

The rest of the activity in this omnibus bill did not raise any concern. It seems to effectively address some issues that are there and we are likely to support it.