




Speech By  
**Brittany Lauga**

**MEMBER FOR KEPPEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 19 April 2023

### **HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (12.50 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I start by thanking the Health and Environment Committee, under the leadership of the chair, the member for Thuringowa, for their work in examining this bill. I thank the committee secretariat for their ongoing work to support the committee's examination of the bill.

The Palaszczuk government is focused on making Queensland home to good jobs, better services and a great lifestyle. Our government is committed to significant reform in Queensland Health which will drive innovation in the delivery of health care for all Queenslanders. This innovation extends to supporting all health workers to work to their full potential and skills.

The Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 will implement key policy initiatives to support better public health outcomes for Queenslanders and ensure health legislation is contemporary and effective. The amendments to the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 will enshrine in legislation that the physical and psychological health, safety and wellbeing of the public health workforce is appropriately prioritised.

It is important to recognise that our public healthcare workers work in high-pressure, complex environments day in and day out. This work can often pose safety risks which impact healthcare workers' physical and psychological health. Queenslanders can only stay healthy if we have a healthy workforce to support them. I know friends and local people who work in Queensland Health so often put their duty of care ahead of their own health and wellbeing.

My friend Alicia, who is a nurse at the Rockhampton Hospital, spends much of her time outside of work recovering from the emotional and physical energy exerted in the line of duty. It is the same too for my friend Rachel—a nurse who was physically injured in the line of duty. I know that this has had a tremendous impact on her.

This bill ensures that the HHS's obligations to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of their workforce are clear. It requires boards and HHSs to promote a culture and implement measures within their HHS to support the health, safety and wellbeing of the staff. The obligations will apply to all staff working in public sector health services—our doctors, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals through to the operational and administrative staff who keep our HHSs running.

Further, health security officers do an important job ensuring everyone within a hospital stays safe and secure. My friend Jamie is a security officer at Queensland Health and I know how seriously he takes his job of keeping everyone in the hospital as safe as possible. The bill amends the Hospital and Health Boards Act to make clear that health security officers cannot provide a direction for a person to leave the hospital and health service if the person requires emergency medical treatment. This amendment is reflective of current practice whereby security officers communicate with clinical staff before providing a direction to a person to leave a HHS to ensure that they are not preventing access to essential medical treatment.

The bill also amends the Public Health Act 2005 to authorise schools to disclose student information to Queensland Health's vision screening program. Each year Queensland Health's vision screening program screens around 45,000 Queensland prep students for the presence of amblyopia, known as lazy eye, and amblyopic risk factors. Screening a child takes less than five minutes but can help to give them the best possible start to their education. Early detection of vision problems ensures a child can be treated early, reducing the impact on their learning and development.

I have seen firsthand the benefit that this vision screening can have at our local state schools. Many hundreds of children each year are referred for further tests and treatment, which makes a huge difference to the lives and learning of these students. I recently signed the consent form for Odette to have her screening done at her state primary school as a prep student.

**Ms Pease:** I can't believe she is in prep already.

**Ms LAUGA:** She is in prep and she is enjoying it immensely. It is amazing the support services that Queensland Health and the Department of Education offer in terms of early detection and screening programs. It makes a world of difference to these young people and to their future.

The Public Health Act already allows student information to be shared between schools and public dental and immunisation programs. The bill inserts the Queensland Health Primary School Nurse Health Readiness Program, known as the vision screening program, as a program to which the student information can be disclosed under the Public Health Act. This will enable vision screening nurses to oversee the consent process for vision screening without relying on school staff. It helps take the burden off those school staff who already have so much administrative work to do.

While I am on my feet, I take this opportunity to put on the record again in this place my thanks, on behalf of the community, to the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service for all the work they do to keep our community as safe and healthy as possible. Under the leadership of CEO Dr Emma McCahon, the CQHHS provides public health services in hospitals and communities across Central Queensland. In regional cities, coastal communities and remote rural towns, the CQHHS team of more than 3,700 delivers great care for Central Queenslanders.

It is wonderful to have the skills, leadership and expertise of Dr McCahon at the helm, not to mention Chief Financial Officer Nicole Trost; Executive Director Workforce Shareen McMillan; Executive Director of Nursing and Midwifery and Quality and Safety Sue Foyle; Executive Director of Medical Services Professor Pooshan Navathe; Executive Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Wellbeing Donna Cruickshank; Executive Director of Allied Health Services Kerrie-Anne Frakes; and Chief Operating Officer Pauline McGrath. How fortunate we are to have women in seven of the eight executive roles at CQHHS. Women are definitely leading the way in health in CQ.

I am also proud of our Central Queensland Hospital Foundation, CQShines. Driven under the leadership of chair Dan Smith and executive manager Hannah Gardner, CQShines provides valued financial support to the public hospital and health services network across the Central Queensland region. All donations contribute towards critical funding for education, training and research in medical and health science which will advance, support and promote public health for the members of our community.

The establishment of the statutory Central Queensland Hospital Foundation is a great success for the Central Queensland community. Hospital foundations play a significant role in supporting their associated HHS and local communities. Thank you to Dan, Hannah and the team at CQShines. I look forward to working together with them in the future to help advance, support and promote public health in Central Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.