




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR HILL

Record of Proceedings, 12 September 2023

**HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGULATION NATIONAL LAW (SURGEONS)
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (4.03 pm): I rise to give my contribution to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Surgeons) Amendment Bill 2023. As I understand it, the bill amends the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law. The objectives of the amendments are: to protect the title 'surgeon' within the medical profession to safeguard the public and strengthen the regulation of cosmetic surgery in Australia, and to clarify the decision-making authority of tribunals after hearing a matter about a registered health practitioner. I note that all Australian health ministers agreed to the amendments on 24 February 2023. I also note that the committee's recommendation to pass the bill without any statements of reservation demonstrates that the changes are widely accepted and welcomed. The 19 submissions to the bill were overwhelmingly supportive of the changes.

It is important that we protect the term 'surgeon'. Surgeons are recognised by the public as highly respected and highly trained and qualified professionals. As such, the use of the term by some practitioners who do not meet minimum standards to call themselves a cosmetic surgeon should be subject to consequences. Cosmetic surgery has experienced an explosion in popularity in the modern era, with many wanting to capitalise on revenue generated by this growing industry. Australians spend big on cosmetic surgery, ranking in the top 10 countries. In 2017 Australia hit the billion dollar mark when they spent \$1 billion on cosmetic surgery, with the total number of procedures performed in Australia topping 200,000. With an industry with a large sum of money involved, you always get those who try to take advantage—or, in other words, cowboys.

Before I finish and while we are talking about surgeons, I want to mention the opening of the new \$86 million Atherton Hospital last week with the Minister for Health, the Hon. Shannon Fentiman. The new facility includes an emergency department, medical imaging, a general medical ward, a maternity ward, birthing suites, and, yes, two new operating theatres for those qualified surgeons. I commend the bill to the House.