




Speech By
Brittany Lauga

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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PHARMACY BUSINESS OWNERSHIP BILL

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (4.07 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill 2023. Local pharmacies make a difference to the lives and health care of Queenslanders every single day. I am so grateful for them. Local pharmacies are the heart of communities right across Queensland. They make sure that our kids, our families and our neighbours can access essential health advice and support closer to home. That has been my No. 1 priority—essential health advice and health care closer to home for every Queenslander.

One pharmacist I would like to give a special mention to in this place today is Rockhampton pharmacist Carina Finn. Carina is the pharmacist in charge at Priceline Parkhurst in my electorate. She is just so incredibly caring and thoughtful. It was very fitting that she was awarded Priceline Pharmacist of the Year in 2020 for the entire country. She is a very special person. She has helped me and my family so many times. She wears this beautiful bright pink lipstick that matches the Priceline branding perfectly, and Odette remembers her every single time. When we walk in there she asks, 'Is Carina here today?'

It was back in 2017 two weeks before the state election. It was Remembrance Day. Odette was only three weeks old. I had just been at the Remembrance Day service at the RSL. I was exhausted and I had also developed an infection. I was prescribed some medicine but I was told that I had to stop breastfeeding as it was not safe to take it whilst breastfeeding. I was devastated because, as a new mum, I was absolutely determined to breastfeed my baby. When I went in to see Carina I was absolutely distraught, but she was so incredibly helpful—'That's fine. We can help you with something else.' She got me sorted and I continued on that breastfeeding journey, but I hate to think what would have happened if I did not have Carina that day.

I also give a shout-out to Tom Lloyd from LiveLife Pharmacy in Yeppoon who has always been very helpful. LiveLife Pharmacy is two doors down from my electorate office, so I see the pharmacists and the staff there very often. It was only a few weeks ago that I was asking Tom some advice about type 1 diabetes and the prescription of insulin to patients. It was very handy that he accidentally pocket dialled me that morning and was on hand to answer my clinical questions to assist in a policy idea that I had come across with a constituent. 'Call me any time if you need advice,' he said. I also want to mention Bruce Elliot, Dan Carpenter, Penny Shepherd, Stephen Collins and Rod Dakhlallah at LiveLife Pharmacy and all of the pharmacists right across Keppel and, indeed, Queensland. I acknowledge the pharmacists who are here in the gallery today as well.

I was so incredibly pleased to have Tom Lloyd make representations to me back in 2022 about the vaccinations in pharmacy program under the National Immunisation Program. I am so pleased that Queensland signed on to the program. It commenced in January 2024. This is a Commonwealth funded program that allows eligible people to access free National Immunisation Program vaccines from Queensland Health registered pharmacy vaccination service providers with no out-of-pocket costs. I am pleased that I was able to advocate on behalf of Tom, pharmacies across Queensland and the

community. The program commenced in January of this year. It means that more people will have access to immunisations at no cost to them. More people will be protected from the flu, HPV, shingles, measles, mumps, rubella, meningococcal and pneumonia because pharmacists will be able to vaccinate them. This program will save lives, and I am so pleased that Tom contacted me to advocate for this program. I give a big shout-out to you, Tom Lloyd. I love your work! I was so pleased to work together with you to make it happen. Bruce Elliot from LiveLife Pharmacy wanted me to let you all know that under this program this year to date the LiveLife Pharmacy in Yeppoon has administered 259 Shringrix vaccines to protect against shingles as well as 175 COVID boosters. They have now commenced giving the pneumonia vaccine, too. That is a great result for little Yeppoon!

Whether it is diabetes screening, a blood pressure check, vaccination or delivery of medication to patients at their home, community pharmacies provide incredible life-saving services every day. Pharmacists are highly trained healthcare professionals and they play a crucial role in educating patients about medications, ensuring proper usage and advising on potential side effects or interactions. Their accessibility and trustworthiness make them invaluable allies in our regional, rural and remote communities. As a regional member of this place, I can attest to that.

My mum has always been a big believer in pharmacists. 'Go to the chemist and ask the pharmacist,' she has always told me. 'They are so knowledgeable,' she says. My mum was one of six children. She grew up on the land at Theodore and Tara. My mum's mum, my grandmother, valued the opinion of our family chemist. They saw more of him than the doctor, and they would consult with him on a whole range of issues. My mum said, 'He was an important person in the community.' Pharmacists are still very much important members of our community.

That is why I am pleased the bill will support the community pharmacy model by retaining and strengthening the requirements for pharmacy businesses to be primarily owned by pharmacists or pharmacist-led corporations. This will help ensure that owners of pharmacy businesses continue to prioritise the welfare and health of patients above all other considerations. The bill also ensures the community pharmacy model can be sustained into the future by establishing the Queensland Pharmacy Business Ownership Council. The council's main role will be administering the pharmacy business ownership requirements in the legislation. Furthermore, to ensure the adequate oversight of pharmacy businesses a new licensing framework will be implemented. This framework requires pharmacy business owners to obtain a licence for each of their businesses.

This bill is designed to safeguard the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders by ensuring it continues ownership of pharmacy businesses by pharmacists. The Miles Labor government is committed to supporting Queensland community pharmacies. Community pharmacies are an essential pillar of our healthcare system and play a vital role in safeguarding our health and wellbeing. A pharmacist or pharmacist controlled corporation may own a maximum of five pharmacy businesses under the bill, and the Mater and permitted friendly societies may own a maximum of six pharmacy businesses. This bill will ensure that all communities, no matter where in Queensland, offer health services that extend far beyond simply filling prescriptions. I commend the bill to the House.