




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

Record of Proceedings, 19 March 2024

PHARMACY BUSINESS OWNERSHIP BILL

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (4.30 pm): I, too, rise to contribute to the Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill. I must say: if there was a bill to talk about not only the health crisis but also the chaos and crisis that is going on under the Palaszczuk government, now the Miles government—all the same government—it is—

Mr Power interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will take that interjection. It is important to understand that this bill responds to a parliamentary committee report that is almost six years old. I mean, come on! Talk about chaos and crisis! They cannot even get something procedural through—six years.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): The member for Logan will cease his interjections.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. With that, I would like to acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Mr Chris Owens, who does a power of work on behalf of the Pharmacy Guild and not just within the city; he is a big proud owner of a regional pharmacy as well. Thank you, Chris. I know that Matthew Battams is up there as well—I give a shout-out to you. I cannot properly see the other two people. If I had your names I would yell out and say a big hello to you as well. We on this side of the chamber love our community pharmacists. Community pharmacists are the people who keep rural and regional Queensland ticking. I know that in places like the South Burnett, Somerset, the Gympie region—

Mr McDonald: The Lockyer.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON:—and the Lockyer region, we need our community pharmacists. We need our community pharmacists because our hardworking doctors and nurses are overwhelmed with the crippling health crisis that is going on particularly in rural and regional Queensland. That is why I give a big shout-out to Barry and Paul at the Nanango and Kingaroy Discount Drug Store; Jack, Dannielle, Chris, Cobey and Tom at Blooms The Chemist Kingaroy; and Michael at the Toogoolawah Pharmacy. I note that when the Albanese government was fiddling around with the books federally I had a great meeting with Michael about his concerns there. There is also William at the Direct Chemist Outlet Kilcoy; Mark at Wondai and Proston pharmacies; Stew and Nishadi at Amcal+ Pharmacy Murgon; Andrew at Good Price Pharmacy Warehouse in Kingaroy; and the Discount Drug Store in Esk. I have missed Hamish there somewhere. He is one of my local pharmacists; I go to him quite often. There is the Goomeri Community Pharmacy; the Kilkivan Pharmacy; David at the Blackbutt Pharmacy; and the Yarraman Pharmacy. These are just within the Nanango electorate, and I know that I have missed quite a few.

There are two extremely impressive female pharmacists—not just Dannielle at Kingaroy—whom I want to give a shout-out to, because they took the time to write submissions for the committee to consider as part of the report which the government left on the shelf for nearly 2,000 days. One is the

mighty Lucy Walker from Goondiwindi. I note that the member for Southern Downs is on this speaking list, and I am sure he will talk about Georgina. I have been lucky enough to visit that pharmacy where she uses that incredible robot; it is unreal. Lucy Walker is an incredible local. Georgina Twomey runs an amazing pharmacy. Both of these incredible pharmacists made submissions for the committee's consideration. They are probably wondering what has been going on for the last 2,000 days. It is quite extraordinary. As the shadow minister for health noted in talking about the housing crisis, it took 2,000 days to bring legislation to the House. This is why the people have lost faith in this tired, old Labor government. It is worn out and it is engulfed in its own chaos and crisis. The wheels of government certainly turn slowly over there—2,000 days.

Ms Bates interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will take that interjection.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Members for Redlands, Bancroft and Maryborough, take your conversations outside, please.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: If the member for Bancroft wants to say it again, I am happy to take his interjection because I am sure, Mr Deputy Speaker, he is on a warning. If he would like to say something, I am happy to take his interjection and then I can perhaps deliver my speech in silence.

We know that there is only one side of the House that truly really supports our small business owners. There is no greater example of small business owners than our community pharmacists. Take Jack, who runs Blooms The Chemist Kingaroy. Jack and his wife, Laura, and now three beautiful children moved from Brisbane and decided to make Kingaroy their home. What a beautiful place. Not only have they decided to make it their home but they are building their pharmacy business, they are employing people and they should be looked after. People like Jack and Dannielle at Blooms actually help us out, because when you cannot get into the hospital they say, 'Go to your community pharmacist.' Thank goodness they exist in rural and regional Queensland. I am always so very thankful for my community pharmacists for what they do and the service they provide us.

I will acknowledge the pharmacy business owners who made up the majority submitters to this bill. We know that the Pharmacy Guild of Queensland does an incredible amount of work. They work so hard. I want to give a shout-out to each and every one of those community pharmacists within the Nanango electorate. I also wish to acknowledge those within broader rural and regional Queensland. Happy Thank Your Pharmacist Day! Thursday, 21 March is Thank Your Pharmacist Day, and these quiet achievers really deserve our thanks for what they do and for the provision of services to our community.

While we are talking about Thank Your Pharmacist Day on Thursday, I may as well drop in that it is my daughter Lucy's birthday tomorrow. Happy birthday, Lucy. I can connect this back to the pharmacy bill because Lucy is a nurse. She is a very proud registered nurse who is now doing her midwifery, and I know that Lucy would be the first to say, 'If you have just stubbed your toe, go to the pharmacist and get a bandaid.' I am quite sure that is what she would say. The longer she is a nurse, the harsher she is becoming, I notice. She keeps telling me, 'Toughen up, princess.' Anyhow, happy birthday, Lucy.

We all know the compliance burdens involved with onerous regulation. The time taken in the never-ending filling out of forms does put a handbrake on productivity. It makes doing business very difficult for some of these smaller regional pharmacies. Some of those in my community have quite a large staff; others are just one-man or one-woman type operations. That is not to negate the importance of a strong regulatory framework for an industry such as pharmacies, but good government should always look for opportunities to reduce that regulatory burden. It is extremely important.

As a former assistant minister for the reduction of red tape, I will always back anyone who looks for the opportunities to reduce that red tape because ultimately what we need to see, particularly for the development of rural and regional Queensland, is more businesses. We need to see more people who undertake their pharmacy degrees and training and who wish to come out and work, live, enjoy and raise a family in these beautiful country towns. I have listed all of those pharmacies in my local area. I am sure there would be jobs for those pharmacy students who are looking to do training. I know that there are many incredible students who attend high schools in my electorate who end up studying pharmacy. Whenever I meet these students I always say to them, 'Can you make sure you go back to rural and regional Queensland and become a lifelong regional pharmacist because the benefit you can give back to your community is immeasurable and the community will always hold you in high regard.' We could not live in those rural and regional areas if it were not for the services of our pharmacists. I would like to say thank you to our regional pharmacists. I hope you enjoy the day on Thursday.