



Speech By
Hon. Amanda Stoker

MEMBER FOR OODGEROO

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HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

Second Reading

 **Hon. AJ STOKER** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (4.51 pm): This bill does a number of important things and I would like to focus on just one. The bill makes an improvement to the regulatory arrangements for community pharmacies. What it really does is crucial to the availability and quality of community pharmacies. When we look at the big picture, at its core this is about patient safety, because strong frameworks for the function of community pharmacies to deliver outstanding clinical outcomes mean the people in my community get from their local pharmacy better quality and safer health care close to home.

This is really important to my family. We are so well supported, both when we are ill and for preventive health care, by Kelly and the team at the Wellington Point Terry White, closely followed by Karen at the Birkdale Terry White pharmacy. I am a big fan of both of those ladies. Each one is a mother, a committed professional and a serious businesswoman. At the Birkdale pharmacy they have invested in a new fit-out to further enhance the range and quality of services they offer to our community. At the Cleveland pharmacy, Courtney and Sean also do an incredible job. They are always very busy given that they offer such great support to the older people in that part of the electorate. Reflecting their commitment to our community, when he is not helping to give great health care Sean spends his time supporting our local surf club at Point Lookout.

I had the pleasure of joining female pharmacists from across the state on International Women's Day. Members might not realise how many women are incredible professionals and businesswomen in this space. It is really inspiring. I wanted to be part of a celebration of the way that they contribute both to their families and to the health of our wider society at that special event. There are huge advantages to having trusted pharmacy healthcare providers readily available. They live and work in the community and own the businesses that they run, so they really are connected to the needs of the people they serve. The high standards and accountability that that delivers mean better health care for us all. Today I am really pleased to support these enhancements to the community pharmacy regulation.

Of course, soon community pharmacists will be offering more services than ever because we have made permanent the trialled expansion of the scope of practice offered by community pharmacists who make an investment in additional training. At present, people in my community might already visit their pharmacy for the treatment of run-of-the-mill conditions like, say, UTIs or small infections. That will expand to include even quite complex procedures such as physical examinations and treatments by prescription for a lot of conditions. The next time your child comes home with a sore ear or you suspect a case of school sores or a range of other conditions, you can affordably and quickly see a pharmacist rather than having to go to a GP, without compromising the range of treatments that are available. That is a real time saver and a real money saver. If people have not given it a go already, I recommend that when they are at their local community pharmacy they ask the pharmacist how they can help the next time they are not feeling it.

To make sure there is a strong pipeline of skills in this field, the Crisafulli LNP government has extended training subsidies to ensure up to 230 additional pharmacists can be trained for the expanded scope of practice. That amounts to an investment of an extra \$1.5 million. Every time a pharmacist does that extra work, it means a person not waiting for a GP or not needing to go to an emergency department or the Redlands Satellite Health Centre. It gets people better care and it also ensures better and faster care for people facing acute emergencies in our hospitals.

This bill also effects a range of practical improvements to the Public Health Act in relation to the notification of diagnoses of occupational respiratory diseases to the national registry, replacing the Queensland registry that has been in place until now. It amends the Queensland Mental Health Commission Act to make it possible to appoint an acting commissioner when the commissioner is unavailable or when the office is vacant so that there is no disruption to services in this really difficult, important and high-demand field. It amends the Radiation Safety Act to provide a process for how to handle radioactive materials when a member of the community comes across them. That can sometimes happen in environments like school science departments or when dealing with old equipment such as aeroplane gauges. This might sound niche, but it is about providing a safe process. It is the kind of business-as-usual improvement you expect from a competent, methodical, on-top-of-it government. I commend the bill to the House.