




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 12 June 2025

HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (3.51 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. What we have just seen with the contribution by the member for Pine Rivers is an inability to adhere to the processes within this parliament with respect to addressing the bill that is under debate.

There are serious matters being dealt with in this bill with respect to clinician engagement and with respect to vaping. They are important matters that need to be discussed and debated here. The principles of adhering to the processes of the parliament are very important. I would say that we have seen an example of that not occurring and previous examples, through estimates hearings and other processes, of the former minister not doing that and finding herself in some serious circumstances.

This legislation delivers on two key commitments of the Crisafulli LNP state government. Firstly, it strengthens—

Ms Boyd interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Marr): Member for Moggill, please take your seat for a moment. Member for Pine Rivers, if you want to challenge relevance, please do it in the appropriate manner, thank you.

Dr ROWAN: Firstly, it strengthens clinical leadership within our hospital and health services. I heard the contribution of the member for Pine Rivers in relation to clinician engagement. Over the past 10 years, doctors, nurses and allied health professionals have not been listened to by Labor governments and, therefore, we have had the Labor health crisis here in Queensland which the LNP government is cleaning up. Secondly, this bill ensures strong practical measures to protect Queenslanders from the harms of illicit tobacco and vaping products.

From day one, the Crisafulli LNP state government has been focused on fixing Labor's health crisis. Across Queensland, our public health system has struggled under years of mismanagement and poor ministerial oversight, with waitlists that have blown out, ambulance ramping worsening and frontline workers desperate for change.

The reforms contained within this legislation represent just one of the many actions by the Crisafulli LNP state government to restore integrity, performance and confidence in our public hospitals and health services. Specifically, this legislation will amend the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 to ensure stronger clinical representation on all hospital and health service boards. For too long, decisions affecting clinical care and hospital operations were made without the direct input of those delivering critical health services. It is important to note that those clinicians have important information and contributions. They are seeing what is happening in the health system and they can ensure not only quality assurance but also quality improvement.

This legislation will implement our election commitment to put doctors, nurses and allied health professionals back in charge of Queensland's health services. This legislation will introduce a new requirement that there be at least one frontline staff member employed in a local health facility on health and hospital boards. To be eligible to be appointed to a board under the amendments contained within this legislation, a clinician must be a registered health practitioner such as a doctor, nurse, midwife or allied health professional. They must also have worked for the health service for at least two years and be working a minimum of eight hours per week providing direct patient care in a public hospital or health facility within the relevant hospital and health service. These reforms will ensure that hospital and health service boards are better informed, more responsive and more grounded in the real-world challenges and solutions of modern public health care.

Turning to the significant second component of this legislation, I want to address our state government's firm action against illicit tobacco and vaping products. As Queenslanders know, the sale of these products exploded under the previous Labor state government, with hundreds of illegal shops operating in broad daylight. The health consequences, particularly for our young Queenslanders, have been profound. Vaping rates amongst Queensland high school students tripled between 2017 and 2023. The Cancer Council Queensland has warned that children who vape are 29 times more likely to try cigarettes. The risk to lung health, to brain development and of long-term addiction is very present and real. That is why we certainly need to address this as a public health issue not only here in Queensland but also across Australia.

Since the election of the Crisafulli LNP state government, Queensland Health has led a determined enforcement campaign. Queensland Health has already seized more than 250,000 vapes and led the largest seizure of illegal cigarettes and vapes by any health authority in Australia. That is under the Crisafulli LNP government. Importantly, this legislation enhances our enforcement capability even further. Firstly, it allows for the immediate forfeiture and destruction of seized vaping goods without the need to store them for eight weeks under outdated legal provisions. Secondly, this legislation introduces a new court ordered cost recovery scheme. This allows our courts to require convicted offenders to pay back the costs incurred in enforcement, investigation, seizure, storage and prosecution. Queenslanders should not have to bear the costs of cleaning up the mess created by those who profit from illegal activity. This cost recovery mechanism sends a strong signal that not only will the government shut down your trade but we will make you pay for it as well.

This legislation is a clear example of how the Crisafulli LNP state government is getting on with delivering the fresh start that Queenslanders voted for, by enhancing clinical leadership in our hospitals and acting to keep our communities healthy and safe. I want to re-emphasise clinician engagement. If we are to continue with a modern healthcare system here in Queensland, we need to ensure that our clinicians are engaged, that they are developing those services and that they are contributing to not only the clinical but also the management oversight of those health services. It is very important that their voices are heard and listened to, because they are able to contribute not only to clinical governance arrangements but also to corporate governance. They are able to ensure efficiency and productivity within the health system and to ensure good clinical outcomes for patients right across the board. That is not only in our public health system but also in the private health system. This is very focused, practical legislation. It certainly supports our frontline staff. It strengthens public health enforcement and it delivers on our commitments to Queenslanders. As such, I commend the bill to the House.