



Speech By
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QUEENSLAND INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL RESEARCH BILL 2025

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (5.33 pm): I rise to address the Queensland Institute of Medical Research Bill 2025. This legislation represents another important reform by the Crisafulli Liberal National Party state government to modernise Queensland's statutory frameworks, ensuring that our public institutions remain contemporary, accountable and capable of delivering the innovation that underpins the health and prosperity of our state of Queensland.

For almost 80 years the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, QIMR, has been one of Queensland's great scientific and medical institutions. Since its establishment in 1945, QIMR has evolved from a small operation of seven researchers in an ex-military hut in Victoria Park into one of the world's leading medical and research institutions. It now employs more than 1,000 scientists, clinicians and students.

QIMR's contribution to medical science has been extraordinary. Its research has driven advances in cancer biology, infectious disease control, genetics, mental health and population health, with translational benefits that extend far beyond Queensland's borders. Across the last eight decades, its work has saved lives, informed public policy and helped enshrine Queensland's reputation as a global leader in medical discovery. However, after 80 years, the legislative framework governing QIMR—the Queensland Institute of Medical Research Act 1945—is no longer fit for purpose for the contemporary research environment.

The world has changed dramatically so our statutory frameworks must be modernised. Accordingly, this legislation repeals the 1945 act and replaces it with a modern and fit-for-purpose legislative framework. It ensures that QIMR's governance arrangements reflect contemporary standards of integrity, accountability and efficiency. It will also allow QIMR to remain at the forefront of discovery and innovation and to continue contributing to improved health outcomes for Queenslanders.

As a specialist physician, I appreciate the vital role of translational research in advancing medicine—research that moves from the laboratory to the clinic, from discovery to treatment, and from innovation to improved quality-of-life outcomes. QIMR has long been a leader in that endeavour. However, importantly, it does not operate in isolation. It is part of a world-class health ecosystem that includes our universities, hospitals and biotechnology companies, each contributing to the advancement of human health. Since I completed my medical training and both my internship and residency at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital in the mid-1990s, I have watched as the Queensland Institute of Medical Research has continued to evolve over the last 30 years.

The Queensland Institute of Medical Research Bill 2025 will strengthen the health ecosystem here in Queensland by ensuring QIMR has the capacity to collaborate effectively and respond swiftly to opportunities and challenges alike. Here in Brisbane, QIMR forms part of the broader Herston Health Precinct alongside the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and the University of Queensland. These institutions together are at the forefront of our state's research and clinical excellence, and their partnership is essential to Queensland's ongoing success in medical innovation.

As the state member for Moggill, I know that many residents in our community across Brisbane's western suburbs work within our universities and research institutions. Their expertise and contributions drive much of the innovation that we see in our hospitals, in public health and in biotechnology. The local connection between research and community outcomes cannot be overstated, and we certainly thank them for all of their ongoing work and discovery.

I am also delighted to be one of the official champions of the University of Queensland's Institute for Molecular Bioscience, IMB. I am particularly proud of the collaborative work that has been taking place between IMB and QIMR. Together, these two institutions have achieved remarkable outcomes and demonstrate the power of Queensland's research partnerships.

One prominent example of Queensland's research collaboration is the Queensland Emory Development (QED) Alliance—a partnership historically linking QIMR, IMB and the Emory University in the United States. Under that alliance, Queensland researchers have worked together to advance drug and vaccine development in areas such as cancer, infectious diseases and therapeutics. Over the years, the momentum from the QED Alliance has carried into newer initiatives—for example, the Queensland Emory Drug Discovery Initiative, which continues to build on that early collaborative foundation. These kinds of partnerships showcase the unique strength of Queensland's research landscape, one where collaboration, not competition, drives discovery.

As QIMR celebrates its 80th anniversary this year, the Institute for Molecular Bioscience is similarly celebrating its 25th anniversary. This milestone not only recognises a quarter century of world-class scientific achievement but also reaffirms Queensland's position as a global leader in biotechnology, genomics and molecular medicine. I look forward to joining with the University of Queensland and many others in recognising this milestone.

I turn to some of the specific details of the legislation. The Queensland Institute of Medical Research Bill 2025 delivers a number of key reforms. Firstly, it introduces a new governance framework for QIMR and its council, aligning it with modern standards of public administration. It will strengthen integrity and accountability by requiring the council to notify the minister of any significant concerns about the institute's financial position or management and by enabling the Minister for Health to access relevant criminal history information of council members. These measures promote confidence in QIMR's operations and safeguard the reputation of one of our most trusted institutions here in Queensland. Importantly, this legislation will also update the arrangements for the appointment of the director of QIMR. Under a new framework, the council may appoint the director with ministerial approval, allowing greater flexibility to recruit and retain high-calibre research leaders. The legislation also allows for the appointment of acting directors for up to six months, ensuring continuity of leadership during transitional periods.

I also note that another key reform being delivered is in relation to commercialised incentive payments. Under the current act, the framework for recognising intellectual property contributions is restrictive and outdated and this bill modernises that approach by establishing a fairer and more flexible structure that recognises the collaborative nature of modern science. These changes are about more than administrative efficiency; they are about building an environment that encourages innovation and attracts the best and brightest researchers to Queensland. Indeed, in a global market for talent, we must ensure that our institutions can be rewarded for excellence, foster creativity and retain the people whose work delivers our life-saving discoveries.

Finally, the bill also clarifies QIMR's ability to receive and manage gifts, donations and bequests in line with financial and governance best practice. This is an important update as philanthropic and community support certainly plays a vital role in sustaining research and enabling long-term scientific investment. Beyond these structural reforms, this legislation reflects the Crisafulli Liberal National Party state government's broader vision, one that recognises that a strong and modern translational research sector is essential to a strong and modern health system. QIMR's research is delivering outcomes that embody this vision. Its collaborations, including those with the Institute for Molecular Bioscience, have further advanced the understanding of cancer genetics and mental health. They have demonstrated what is possible when Queensland's best minds work together across institutions.

In concluding my contribution, I say that this legislation is about giving QIMR the legislative support it needs to continue that work, to keep being a respected leader in translational science and to strengthen the partnerships that define Queensland's health and innovation landscape. As QIMR celebrates its 80th anniversary this year, it is timely that this parliament renews its commitment to the institute's success. I wish to extend my appreciation to QIMR's council, leadership team and staff as well as the countless researchers, clinicians and students who contribute daily to Queensland's scientific excellence.

The Queensland Institute of Medical Research Bill 2025 strengthens the governance, flexibility and integrity of one of our state's most valued institutions. It ensures that Queensland remains at the forefront of global medical research, delivering better health outcomes and economic opportunities for generations to come. Those clinicians, researchers and others make contributions to not only improve the health, wellbeing and lives of Queenslanders but also create critically important economic opportunities for our state. That not improves only the efficiency of our health system but also provides economic opportunities for job creation. With those words, I commend the bill to the House.