



Speech By
Corrine McMillan

MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

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QUEENSLAND INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL RESEARCH BILL 2025

 **Ms McMillan** (Mansfield—ALP) (3.49 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research Bill 2025. It would be remiss of me not to highlight those comments made by the member for Redcliffe, particularly in relation to the seriousness of skin cancer, which we know affects more Queenslanders than people from anywhere else in the world. I hope—and I am sure—the member for Redcliffe has raised with the health minister the cuts he made to the Queensland Cancer Council recently. As is the case with measles, it is our young people who will be the victims of skin cancer in time to come—young people and those most vulnerable, who rely on governments to protect them and to support them. This is yet another example of where the LNP government have failed our young people.

The Labor opposition is incredibly proud of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research and the work produced by the hardworking scientists, pioneers, inventors and collaborators of the institute and, of course, the QIMR council. The work of the QIMR is groundbreaking and life-changing, as many others in the House have spoken about. The institute is internationally recognised for its work and the changes it has made to the face of medicine and public health. The opposition supports the majority of this bill, but we do have some concerns surrounding the appointment process. It should come as no surprise that we have concerns around the appointment process given what we have witnessed happen with the appointment—or lack of appointment—of the CHO. However, I would first like to focus on the positives in this bill.

The importance of the work of the QIMR cannot be understated. Thanks to their work, we have life-changing immunotherapy research, the discovery of the Ross River virus in 1963, important research into melanomas and skin cancer prevention, and the discovery of the gene responsible for haemochromatosis. Of course, they also played a vital role in supporting the Queensland Labor government's COVID-19 public health response. It is these examples that demonstrate why the Labor opposition supports the amendments in this bill which will appropriately value the hardworking and dedicated scientists, researchers, collaborators and workers at QIMR, regardless of their role description. At this point in time, only roles defined as 'discoverer' or 'inventor' can receive bonuses, but we know that modern science research is deeply and increasingly a collaborative effort, a team effort, that involves a variety of skill sets, roles and expertise.

The bill expands on the defined roles to allow the council to recognise and reward the wide range of employees who contribute to scientific discoveries and/or the development of intellectual property. This provides a fairer and more equitable method for the payment of incentives, thus delivering the most Australian of values—that is, a fair go for all. The Labor opposition also welcomes the openness and transparency created by the requirements for the council to immediately notify the minister on matters that raise significant concerns. Additionally, we also welcome the clarifications around dealing with gifts, the declaration of personal interests, and providing increased administrative flexibility and responsiveness for the council to manage issues that arise at the institute. We also support this bill that will modernise legislation for the institute which more accurately reflects the modern scale, function and role it plays in Queensland and on the international stage within the health sector.

However, while there are a great many positives in this bill, the Labor opposition has some concerns, as I mentioned earlier. These concerns specifically surround the changes to the appointment process which removes the Governor in Council oversight of the council of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research. The Labor opposition believes that the removal of this process brings the integrity and transparency surrounding council appointments into question. To be quite blunt and frank, it really is about trust and integrity. It is about the fact that this opposition does not trust the government to act with integrity and with honesty in making appointments. I think there is enough evidence to demonstrate why we have a concern in relation to this. We already know that the LNP has a record of doing 'jobs for mates' recruitment drives. We have seen it since the election on 26 October 2024. We have seen copious numbers—

Mr POWELL: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. This is not pertinent to the long title of the bill or the actual contents of the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Whiting): Member for Mansfield, I would caution you about going into some things that perhaps are not covered by the title of this bill, even though you have some room for rebuttal of issues that have been raised previously in debate.

Ms McMILLAN: The Labor opposition will not simply stand by and allow this to happen. Any role in any circumstance must go to the best qualified person for the job. When this happens, the people of Queensland prosper under a Public Service that hires the best of the best workers to serve them.

In conclusion, the Labor opposition supports this bill. The changes are necessary and fairly award our hardworking professionals at QIMR as well as increase the transparency measures for the council and modernise the legislation around the institute. However, we will continue to hold the Crisafulli LNP government to account. The LNP cannot be allowed to go on a 'jobs for mates' recruitment drive for the Queensland Institute of Medical Research council.

Mr Hunt interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Nicklin. That was uncalled for.

Ms McMILLAN: I will say that when I do a simple Google search and I look through the board members who take on those roles on QIMR they are highly qualified and they are significant leaders in the medical field. It would look very strange if one of the 'mates' appeared amongst that list of QIMR board members. The Labor opposition will work hard to ensure the government hires people who are best suited for the roles on this council and we will continue to hold the LNP to account.