



Speech By
Donna Kirkland

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

Second Reading

 **Mrs KIRKLAND** (Rockhampton—LNP) (6.24 pm): I rise to speak to the Health Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2025. From the outset I would like to thank the committee for its work in listening to stakeholders and community around the legislative amendments within this bill. The report's recommendation was without any statement of reservation and it was recommended that the bill be passed. I would also like to extend my thanks to the Minister for Health, who has been working with diligence and dedication to detail—because details matter. The bill before us amends four separate acts, including the Pharmacy Business Ownership Act, the Public Health Act, the Queensland Mental Health Commission Act and the Radiation Safety Act.

Part of the bill includes amendments around pharmacy ownership and occupation. The intent of the Pharmacy Business Ownership Act is to ensure ownership of and interests in pharmacy businesses are primarily restricted to practising pharmacists and pharmacist-controlled corporations. Pharmacists play a vital role in overseeing the operation of pharmacies to maintain high standards of medication safety and patient care. Their expertise ensures accurate dispensing of prescriptions, effective patient communication and proper inventory control, all whilst complying with regulatory and ethical guidelines. As trusted healthcare professionals our pharmacists contribute significantly to the overall wellbeing of our communities.

The bill also expands the scope of practice of pharmacies to diagnose and to treat. We used to do this years ago. Coming from a small country town it was paramount to us, without being able to get into a doctor easily, to go into our local pharmacy and have them diagnose what was going on. It is great that this has been expanded to alleviate some of the pressure on our current GPs as well as the overflows at our emergency departments in the hospitals. Pharmacies are absolutely regionally significant and I would like to give a shout-out to a few of my local pharmacists: Henrieke from TerryWhite Chemmart Day and Night is there for us in the evenings when all things go wrong; Carina from Priceline Pharmacy at Parkhurst; and also Marie from Ramsay Pharmacy. We have over 28 registered pharmacies in my region.

The notification of occupational respiratory diseases is now transferable to a national registry because of this bill. The creation of the National Occupational Respiratory Disease Registry places the Commonwealth at the forefront of collecting and managing the data on preventable work related respiratory conditions across Australia, illnesses such as silicosis, asbestosis and certain cancers. Consolidating the data and implementing uniform national reporting standards will enhance efforts to identify, monitor and reduce the incidence of these serious and often fatal diseases. Legislation has been introduced to support this initiative by mandating that all relevant diagnoses be reported to the national registry, effectively replacing the Queensland registry. Queensland Health will retain access to patient records for cases that are diagnosed within the state, making sure that data from regions will be accessible via the secure portal of the national registry.

Another part of the bill that we are debating tonight ensures that we can leave out traps at locations overnight to make sure that we are detecting the Japanese encephalitis virus. This is important to the regions because we have had a case of JEV at one of the piggeries at Banana.

The member for Miller suggested this bill is not important enough or relevant enough to be presented on its own. Indeed, he called it a trivial bill. I would say to the member that I am certain that the people of Queensland would value the expansion of the scope of practice of pharmacists to bring significant relief to the pressures on our GPs and our hospital emergency departments. I would suggest that these pressures were created by 10 years of lack of planning, lack of funding and lack of management by the previous Labor government.

Sitting suspended from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm.



Mrs KIRKLAND: Before the dinner break I was halfway through my address on this very important piece of legislation. I was saying that the member for Miller had suggested that this bill is not important enough or relevant enough to be passed on its own today. Indeed, he called it a trivial bill. I say to the member that I am certain the people of Queensland would value the expansion of the scope of practice of pharmacists to bring significant relief to the pressures on our GPs and our hospital emergency departments—pressures that were created by 10 years of lack of planning, lack of funding and lack of managing by the previous Labor governments.

I would also say to the member that the people of Central Queensland would absolutely love to see mosquito trapping made more efficient and more effective through the bill's extension of the provisions for the placement of equipment. This will mean that traps can be left out to monitor night activity, to ensure sufficient sampling sizes of the mosquito colonies.

Our communities deserve to be safer. I would also suggest to the member that the work of the Queensland Mental Health Commission is exceptionally important and the ability for the minister to appoint a commissioner when needed is equally as important. Additionally, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia fully supports the bill, stating that its amendments are critical.

I would say to the member for Miller that this is far from a trivial bill. In fact, I would say that it is an incredibly important piece of legislation that we are debating tonight. Whilst I have highlighted only a small portion of the important amendments, I fully endorse and commend the bill to the House.