




Speech By
Glen Kelly

MEMBER FOR MIRANI

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HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr G KELLY** (Mirani—LNP) (6.00 pm): I rise tonight in support of the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. Our healthcare system has been under pressure for too long, and the Crisafulli government is committed to fixing it. We are putting Queenslanders first, ensuring our frontline health workers have the support they need to deliver the care our communities deserve. Those who work on the front line know our health system better than anyone: they live it every day. They see the challenges firsthand. They know the gaps in care, the staffing shortages and the pressure that comes from having under-resourced hospitals. They have done an incredible job despite these challenges, but they deserve better. They deserve a voice in how their workplaces are run. That is why we are pushing ahead with our commitment to put frontline staff on hospital boards. This is not just about ticking boxes; it is about ensuring we have local solutions to local problems. Every hospital has unique challenges and the best people to guide the solutions are the ones who work there.

The Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 is a key part of this plan. It sets out to ensure frontline health workers have a real say in hospital management by requiring their representation on health service boards. This means local staff can directly influence the decisions that impact patient care and hospital operations. It focuses on tailoring healthcare solutions to the unique needs of each region, particularly in rural and regional areas like the electorate of Mirani.

According to the 2021 census data, my electorate has a population of 50,190. In Sarina—a town of nearly 6,000 people—the hospital has just 21 beds. Mount Morgan has only nine. Our residents often have to travel to Rockhampton or Mackay for care, adding hours of travel to an already stressful situation. Rockhampton and Mackay hospitals are critical to the people of Mirani, but they are facing their own challenges—bed shortages, specialist gaps and rising demand as our population grows. It is clear that these hospitals need more local voices at the table to address these issues.

Since coming to power in October 2024 the Crisafulli government has delivered real improvements where it counts. Rockhampton Hospital is set to receive a \$50 million upgrade to its emergency department, which will ease the pressure on frontline staff and improve patient flow. The \$92 million expansion of the Adult Mental Health Inpatient Unit at Rockhampton Hospital is also underway, addressing the long-standing need for better mental health support in our region. Mackay Base Hospital will benefit from a major \$250 million expansion—adding 128 beds, new birth suites and specialised women's and children's units. This project reflects our commitment to supporting families and reducing wait times for essential care.

Bricks and mortar alone are not enough; we need to support the nurses, doctors and support staff who keep our hospitals running. I recently received an email from Megan, a nurse at Mackay Base Hospital, who shared the daily struggles faced by our frontline health workers. She told me about the pressure of managing eight acutely unwell patients while also acting as team leader during night shifts, often without the support she needs to ensure patient safety and staff wellbeing. This is the reality for too many of our nurses: burnt out, overwhelmed and struggling to balance patient care with the

pressures of an under-resourced system. Megan's story is a powerful reminder that our healthcare system is not just about buildings; it is about people. This bill is so important because it gives those like Megan a real voice in how their workplaces are run, ensuring that decisions about staffing, patient care and safety are made by the people who understand these challenges best: the frontline workers themselves.

The second key focus of this bill is tackling the vaping crisis, which has become a significant health concern in Queensland. I have heard directly from high schools in the Mirani electorate about the challenges they have in managing vaping on school grounds, particularly in areas like toilet blocks where students can hide from supervision. In 2022-23, 35.6 per cent of Queensland high school students had tried vaping and over 78,000 had used these devices in the previous month. This is a health crisis, plain and simple. These devices pose a serious risk not just to the young people using them but also to the broader community.

The bill cuts through the red tape, making it easier to seize and destroy illegal vaping products and freeing up Queensland Health to focus on patient care. This means illegal products can be destroyed quickly, cutting costs and removing the need for unnecessary storage. This legislation aims to protect young Queenslanders from the health risks associated with vaping, reduce youth access to illegal products and ensure that our enforcement officers can focus on keeping our communities safe. It is about putting the health and safety of our kids first, supporting our communities and backing our frontline workers, just like we promised. I commend the bill to the House.