



Speech By
John Barounis

MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH

Record of Proceedings, 18 September 2025

HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

Second Reading

 **Mr BAROUNIS** (Maryborough—LNP) (6.15 pm): Today I rise to speak in support of the Health Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2025. This bill amends the Pharmacy Business Ownership Act 2024, the Public Health Act 2005, the Queensland Mental Health Commission Act 2013 and the Radiation Safety Act 1999. The bill also makes amendments to the Public Health Regulation 2018. The Health, Environment and Innovation Committee made one recommendation: that the bill be passed. There was no statement of reservation.

The Crisafulli government is strengthening the performance and clarity of our health legislation in five key areas including pharmacy business ownership regulation, reporting of occupational respiratory diseases, the detection and management of serious public health risks such as those presented by the Japanese encephalitis virus and, finally, the appointment processes for the leadership of Queensland's Mental Health Commission. These amendments reflect our commitment to improving our regulatory levers and protecting the health and safety of Queenslanders.

Our community pharmacists provide world-class primary health care. For Australians and Queenslanders, pharmacies play a vital role in our communities in providing the medication that so many of our community members rely on. The Maryborough electorate has an aging population and it is pleasing to see more pharmacies opening up in our smaller communities, providing services to the most vulnerable among our society. Constituents who have worked and paid their taxes now want to know that they have a good pharmacist nearby whom they can rely on for advice and support. This is why the Crisafulli government expanded their scope of practice to treat and prescribe medications for acute health conditions such as ear infections, acne, school sores, eczema and mild psoriasis and nausea. I know that with this new legislation members of my community will be able to get seen quicker and treated faster by their local pharmacists.

Obviously, pharmacists are not medical practitioners. We know that, but with extra training subsidies now being extended by the Crisafulli government our pharmacists have access to suitable training to better support our communities. This has meant that about \$1.5 million was available to support up to 230 more pharmacists to be trained to treat these everyday health conditions. This has expanded a pharmacist's scope of practice which in turn improves access to the community and reduces pressure on our GPs and hospital emergency departments. In the past couple of months a small community pharmacy has opened in the suburb of Granville within my electorate. Before that, there had never been a pharmacy in this location. The suburb of Granville and beyond has welcomed this pharmacy, coincidentally called the Friendlies Pharmacy. I have heard that the staff are great and the service to our community is outstanding.

This bill ensures appropriate systems and processes are in place to achieve the intent of the Pharmacy Business Ownership Act 2024. The bill also makes necessary changes to the operation of the act ahead of the expected commencement of the licensing scheme in November 2025. This will

also support the effective operation of the Queensland Pharmacy Business Ownership Council. These amendments are aimed at promoting transparency, protecting the community pharmacy model and ensuring clarity and procedural fairness for licence applicants. More importantly, the amendments also support the transfer of regulatory responsibility for pharmacy business ownership from Queensland Health to the council. This bill ensures that the regulation of pharmacy business ownership in Queensland is effective, clear to stakeholders and operators and in the best interests of the community.

This bill amends the Public Health Act 2025 in relation to the notification of the diagnosis of occupational respiratory disease. By establishing the National Occupational Respiratory Disease Registry, the Commonwealth has assumed primary responsibility by managing the reporting of information about preventable diseases in Australia. Centralising this information and moving towards consistent national reporting system requirements will improve our ability to understand and prevent these debilitating and life-threatening illnesses. This bill supports this important initiative by ensuring that all diagnoses of these diseases are notified to the national registry. The bill decommissions the existing Queensland registry. Queensland Health will continue to have access to patient information about Queensland diagnoses. Information about diagnoses in other Australian jurisdictions will also be available through the secure national registry portal. In its submission to the committee, the Lung Foundation Australia noted the importance of Queensland policymakers and medical practitioners maintaining access to Queensland data within the national registry and being able to access broader trends within the national data.

This bill also clarifies across public health units how local councils can effectively respond to the risk of Japanese encephalitis virus or JEV. To ensure effective testing for JEV it is necessary to capture adult mosquitoes when they are most active. This is done by leaving light traps at relevant locations overnight. Current legislation is ambiguous about when this can be done, which is why this bill provides the clarity needed for our officers to leave necessary equipment at locations for reasonable periods of time.

This bill also makes a minor amendment to correct an inconsistency in the Radiation Safety Act 1999. Occasionally members of the public may come across radioactive materials. For example, a person may discover old aeroplane gauges at a newly purchased rural property or a high school science department might find samples of radioactive rocks and geological items. This bill amends the act to confirm that any person can apply for and hold an approval to dispose of any radioactive material. This will ensure that potentially dangerous materials are brought to the attention of the department's experts in the radiation health team and disposed of safely. The amendment reflects the original intent of the act.

The bill also amends the Queensland Mental Health Commission Act 2013 to ensure that an acting commissioner can be appointed when the commissioner may be unavailable or their office becomes vacant. Being able to see a pharmacist about smaller, simpler medical issues is a life changer. As a local member, as a resident and on behalf of my electorate, I would like to thank the Minister for Health and his team, the committee, and, of course, the Crisafulli LNP government for listening to Queenslanders. I commend the Health Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2025 to the House.