



Speech By  
**Jonty Bush**

**MEMBER FOR COOPER**

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### **QUEENSLAND INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL RESEARCH BILL 2025**

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (6.12 pm): I rise to speak on the Queensland Institute of Medical Research Bill. The Labor opposition is deeply proud of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research and the world-leading work undertaken by its scientists, researchers and collaborators. For decades the QIMR has stood at the forefront of medical innovation, improving health outcomes not just in Queensland but across Australia and the world. The institute's contributions have been nothing short of extraordinary. Its researchers have pioneered breakthroughs in immunotherapy, played a crucial role in the discovery of Ross River virus and advanced our understanding of melanoma and skin cancer. I have to call out the recent cuts by the LNP to the skin cancer education program here in Queensland. We are the melanoma capital of the world. I think it is extraordinary that the LNP can prioritise a budget for funding ads in the *Courier-Mail* and changing our logo from maroon to blue but cannot find funding for a skin cancer education program, given the incredible rates of skin cancer that we have.

It is work like this by the QIMR that underpins the opposition's strong support for the majority of the bill. These amendments will help to ensure they remain a fair, transparent and modern institution—one that continues to attract and retain the brightest scientific minds that we have in the country. The importance of the QIMR's people cannot be overstated. Science today is not the work of a lone inventor; it is collaborative and complex and multidisciplinary. Under the current legislative framework, only those formally recognised as discoverers or inventors are eligible to receive financial incentives for their contributions or new discoveries through intellectual property.

This bill will modernise that framework. It empowers the QIMR council to acknowledge and reward the full spectrum of professionals who contribute to the institute's achievements, whether they are lab technicians, data analysts, project coordinators or support staff. The reforms recognise that great science is a team effort. Every discovery depends on the collective expertise and dedication of diverse specialists. By broadening eligibility for incentive payments, the bill ensures a fairer and more equitable system—one that truly reflects the Australian value of a fair go for all. The change will not only boost morale and fairness within the institute but also help to attract and retain the talent that we need to keep Queensland at the forefront of global medical research.

The Labor opposition also welcomes the bill's provisions aimed at improving transparency and integrity within the QIMR council. Under these amendments the council will be required to promptly notify the minister of any matters that raise significant concerns, ensuring issues are addressed swiftly and openly. The bill clarifies the management of gifts and the declaration of personal interests and enhances the council's administrative flexibility to respond to operational challenges at the time. These are sensible and practical changes that strengthen accountability and reinforce public trust in the governance of this important institution.

The original Queensland Institute of Medical Research Act has served us well, but science and the structure of research organisations have changed dramatically since it was first written. The bill updates and streamlines the legislation so that it better reflects the modern role and scale of the institute both as a state leader in health innovation and as a key player in international medical research. In an

era when research crosses borders and disciplines, it is important that the QIMR's governance and legislative foundations keep pace with that modern scientific landscape. We hope that the bill will achieve that.

As other speakers have outlined, the opposition supports the intent and substance of much of the legislation; however, we do hold concerns about one key aspect: the proposed changes to the appointment process for the QIMR council. Specifically, the bill removes the existing requirement for Governor in Council oversight of appointments to the council. The opposition believes that this change risks undermining the integrity and transparency of that appointment process. We know the importance of ensuring council members are selected based on their merit, their experience and their expertise, not on their political connections. Removing this oversight opens the door to potential politicisation of appointments.

We have seen this before. The LNP has this in its DNA. The LNP has a long record of 'jobs for mates' recruitment drives, where independence and merit take a back seat to political convenience. The QIMR is too important to be subjected to this level of interference. It deserves strong and independent leadership—people appointed purely on their qualifications, their scientific acumen and their ability to advance Queensland's health research agenda. The Labor opposition will not be standing by while the integrity of the institution is compromised. We believe that every appointment in every circumstance should go to the most qualified person for the job. Queenslanders will get the best outcomes through a Public Service that is built on merit and on fairness.

The Labor opposition supports the Queensland Institute of Medical Research Bill 2025. We welcome the measures that modernise the institute's governance, strengthen accountability and deliver fairer recognition for the hardworking scientists, researchers and staff who make the QIMR one of Queensland's greatest scientific assets. However, we will remain vigilant on the risks associated with changes to the appointment process. The Crisafulli government must not use this as an opportunity to stack the QIMR council with politically aligned appointments. The health of Queenslanders and the integrity of our scientific institutions must never be compromised for political convenience.

The Labor opposition will continue to hold the government to account and continue to fight for fairness, transparency and integrity—values that underpin not only good governance but also good science. We will continue to support the outstanding people of the QIMR whose discoveries and dedication improve lives in Queensland and across the world. I commend the bill to the House.