



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

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QUEENSLAND INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL RESEARCH BILL 2025

 **Ms DOOLEY** (Redcliffe—LNP) (3.40 pm): Queenslanders deserve a world-class health system that responds to the pressures of today and looks to solve the challenges of tomorrow. This bill, the Queensland Institute of Medical Research Bill 2025, is about doing exactly that.

For nearly 80 years, the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, or QIMR, has been at the heart of scientific discovery and medical innovation in this state. What began in 1945 with just seven staff working out of an ex-military hut in Victoria Park has grown into Queensland's homegrown and globally respected medical research institute, with more than 1,000 scientists, clinicians and students working every day to improve health outcomes for Queenslanders. In Redcliffe, we see the value of this research firsthand. Whether it is through early cancer detection, improved treatments for depression or new approaches to wound healing and infection control, the discoveries made at QIMR touch the lives of our families, our hospitals and our communities.

The bill before the House repeals the Queensland Institute of Medical Research Act 1945, replacing it with a modern, fit-for-purpose framework that reflects contemporary governance, integrity and operational standards. The current legislation no longer reflects contemporary governance standards or the modern medical research environment. In today's fast-paced, global research landscape, our institutions need agility—the ability to recruit swiftly, to collaborate freely and to maintain the highest standards of transparency. These reforms will ensure that QIMR remains well-governed, competitive and able to focus on high-quality research that improves health outcomes for all Queenslanders and strengthens our state's reputation as a leader in medical research.

The bill introduces stronger integrity and governance provisions—similar to those found in the Hospital Foundations Act 2018—requiring the council to notify the minister of any concerns about QIMR's financial position or management, and ensuring appropriate criminal history checks for all council members. These measures promote transparency and public confidence in QIMR's governance. That is what Queenslanders expect, and it is what this government is delivering—clear oversight, without red tape.

As a member of the Health, Environment and Innovation Committee, we had the wonderful opportunity to visit QIMR earlier this year and see firsthand some of the incredible, world-class research being conducted at their sophisticated laboratories in Herston. I was very impressed with the calibre of professionals working there and the cutting-edge technology used to conduct health research that is world leading.

At the heart of QIMR's success is collaboration. This bill reminds us that research breakthroughs are rarely achieved by one person working alone, yet under the old act only those classed as 'discoverers' or 'inventors' could receive bonuses for commercialised research—leaving out many valuable contributors. This bill changes that by introducing commercialised incentive payments, broadening eligibility so that a wider range of researchers, collaborators and innovators can be

recognised and rewarded. This reform will support QIMR in its ability to attract and retain leading talent and encourage research that improves health outcomes. That is not just good for scientists in the lab; it is good for every Queenslanders who benefits from their discoveries.

Good governance starts with good leadership. Currently, all QIMR council appointments must go through the Governor in Council, which can delay appointments and hinder responsiveness. This bill transfers that responsibility to the health minister, ensuring decisions are made swiftly and transparently. QIMR itself supported this reform, saying that it 'brings several important benefits for the institute's governance and operational effectiveness'. This bill will also allow for the appointment of an acting director to ensure continuity during leadership transitions. These are commonsense reforms that make the institution stronger, more agile and more accountable.

The bill also clarifies QIMR's ability to manage gifts, bequests and donations. QIMR's research is supported not just by government funding but also through millions in donations, generous bequests and philanthropic support generously contributed by the Queensland community.

In electorates like mine in Redcliffe, where our community is known for its generosity and local fundraising efforts, this reform is particularly meaningful. It ensures that when Queenslanders give to medical research—whether through a bequest, a local fundraiser or a community event—their contributions are used effectively and responsibly.

The impact of QIMR's research is felt in Redcliffe. Take skin cancer, for example—an issue close to home for many Queenslanders. QIMR's melanoma risk calculator has already helped nearly 80,000 Australians better understand their personal risk and encourage early detection. In coastal communities like mine in Redcliffe, where weekends are spent in the water, sun safety is a daily conversation and this research quite literally saves lives. We could also consider QIMR's TMS trial for depression, which achieved a 52 per cent response rate. This is a breakthrough in treating one of our most widespread mental health challenges. For families in Redcliffe and right across Queensland, where access to mental health services is vital, these advancements through research bring real hope and relief.

Who could overlook the discovery that enhances the natural healing power of vinegar with nanoparticles—a Queensland-led innovation that can help prevent antibiotic-resistant infections. As a registered nurse who has worked across hospitals, this is life changing and life saving. For our elderly residents and those managing chronic wounds, that is not just research in a lab; that is innovation that protects lives and dignity. Every one of these breakthroughs—every new therapy, every tool for prevention—has its roots in an environment where research can thrive. That is what this bill will ensure: that QIMR can continue to lead the world in discovery while being governed with transparency.

In Redcliffe we know how closely health and community are intertwined. When our hospitals, clinics and researchers have the right support, we all benefit. Our Redcliffe Hospital, for example, partners with researchers and clinicians across Queensland, including through programs inspired by QIMR's Clinician Researcher Academy. It is about bridging research and frontline care so patients can receive the best evidence-based treatments faster.

In closing, as QIMR celebrates its 80th anniversary, we recognise a Queensland institution that has not only stood the test of time but continues to push boundaries of what is possible in science and medicine. The bill gives QIMR the legislative support it needs to continue its vital work. I would like to join the Minister for Health, Tim Nicholls, in thanking all of the researchers, innovators, inventors and support staff whose dedication has made Queensland a global leader in medical research.

This bill reflects our government's commitment to reforming outdated legislation, strengthening integrity, rewarding innovation and supporting science that saves lives. It is about preparing Queensland and communities, like mine in Redcliffe, for the health challenges of tomorrow. I commend the bill to the House.