




Speech By
Rebecca Young

MEMBER FOR REDLANDS

Record of Proceedings, 3 April 2025

**HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGULATION NATIONAL LAW AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs YOUNG** (Redlands—LNP) (12.51 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. This parliamentary sitting week, our government has had a keen focus on community safety. I commend the Attorney-General for the work she and her department have done in that space this week.

In my electorate of Redlands, the need to feel safe in our homes and in our places of work has been front of mind. Whilst we have introduced youth crime laws to tackle brazen lawlessness, there are other forms of personal safety we must also focus on.

Visiting a health professional for what can often be very personal matters requires an unwavering level of trust. We put our health and the health of our loved ones in the hands of the experts. Unfortunately, and to the detriment of patients, there has been a significant increase in the number of complaints of sexual misconduct made against health practitioners. People have a right to know if their healthcare provider has a regulatory history relating to sexual misconduct, and that is what this bill will deliver.

This bill will make more information available about practitioners with a history of sexual misconduct to restore the trust and safety of patients when visiting their health practitioner. This will allow people to make more informed decisions about provision of their health care and also provide hospital and health services and other healthcare employers with the information they need to better protect their patients.

The bill requires the national boards to publish on the public registers the tribunal findings of professional misconduct that are based on sexual misconduct. In 2024, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency reported more than 1,156 complaints against health practitioners about professional boundary violations, including sexual misconduct. This was an increase of 37.5 per cent from the previous year. Of those complaints, 174 related to practitioners working in Queensland. People seeking professional help for their health concerns deserve to feel safe and should not be subjected to a potential run-in with one of those offending practitioners.

Sexual misconduct can cause harm and long-lasting trauma to patients. It can also damage community confidence in the safety of services provided by health practitioners. It is an egregious breach of trust and something that no Queenslanders should have to tolerate. I am supporting this bill to protect my constituents in Redlands and assure their safety when engaging in health advice or visiting their local health professional.

This bill will make three reforms to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law to improve public safety and transparency of information. As the host jurisdiction, Queensland is responsible for amending the national law on behalf of all states and territories. The national law amendments were agreed by the health ministers of all states and territories and the Commonwealth in July 2024. I am pleased our government is delivering this bill not only for Queenslanders but for all Australians.

The first reform will require practitioners whose registration has been cancelled by a tribunal, or who have been disqualified from registration, to obtain the tribunal's approval before they can reapply to a national board for registration. The second reform contained in this bill will require the national boards to permanently publish additional information on the public registers about practitioners whom a tribunal has found to have engaged in professional misconduct based on sexual misconduct. The third reform contained in this bill will strengthen protections for complainants and health consumers.

The bill will also amend the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 and the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 to ensure these reforms operate effectively in Queensland. The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 is just another way the Crisafulli government is focused on the safety of Queenslanders.