

~~employment in order to build a new life in Queensland. It also of course helps people with disabilities. That is what these great programs do.~~

~~Last week I was very proud that we announced the latest round of Skilling Queenslanders for Work. Some \$33.8 million is going into our communities to fund more than 5,700 places for training and assistance in 175 new projects. Almost 14,000 people have already completed or commenced a program in the past 18 months. I am very proud to say that more than 5,100 people have either gained employment already, have gone on to further training or have re-engaged in education. They are fantastic results in only 18 months and we know that those figures are going to grow. I am also proud that this is not a program just for South East Queensland; it is about helping people right across the regions. Last week I had the great pleasure of being in Toowoomba to announce this latest round and to not only visit Toowoomba Clubhouse and look at the great work it is doing but also visit the Toowoomba YWCA and many of the women who have gone through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program there have fled domestic violence. I want to acknowledge those very amazing and very brave women whom I met who have broken away from that violent relationship, often with children, to start a new life and be engaged with this program.~~

~~I am sad to say that I was supposed to go to Toowoomba a couple of weeks earlier for a graduation, but the graduation had to be cancelled because the majority of the participants could not turn up. The good news is the reason they could not turn up is they all had jobs, and I want more graduations being cancelled because they are already in employment before they even graduate. I am also pleased to say that the Darling Downs is benefiting from \$2.7 million from this program with 327 places and 19 new projects. That means Toowoomba, Dalby, Stanthorpe, Charleville and Roma are all benefiting from this great project.~~

~~(Time expired)~~

~~Biggera Waters State School, Telephone System Upgrade~~

~~**Miss BARTON:** My question is directed to the Minister for Education and I refer to Biggera Waters State School in my electorate. The school, established in 1970, has a telephone system which is unreliable and has resulted in teachers using their mobile phones for emergency and internal phone calls. The school has been told it is its responsibility to fund the upgrade of this phone system out of vital curriculum funding. Will the minister commit to upgrading the phone system, which is older than me, or is it the school's responsibility?~~

~~**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister for Education, you have one minute.~~


~~**Ms JONES:** I am happy to have a look at that and happy to talk to the member straight after question time if the member for Broadwater would like, but I say this: no matter whether on the Gold Coast or across regional Queensland or in South East Queensland, not one school has ever said to me that they supported the 500 cuts to teachers that the member's government delivered.~~

~~**Mr SPEAKER:** Question time has finished.~~

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~~MINISTERIAL STATEMENT~~

~~Correction of Private Member's Statement; Alcohol Fuelled Violence~~

~~ **Dr LYNHAM:** I rise to correct the record. It has been brought to my attention that, while the \$50,000 donation from Chalk on Stanley to the LNP was declared to the AEC in January, it is included in the ECQ returns for the first half of 2016. It was still made after the committee report was handed down and the Leader of the Opposition still has significant questions to answer.~~

PUBLIC HEALTH (MEDICINAL CANNABIS AFFORDABILITY) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

~~ **Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—ONP) (11.45 am): <I present a bill for an act to amend the Public Health >(Medicinal Cannabis) Act 2016 to ensure the affordability of the lawful treatment of persons with whole plant medicinal cannabis. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee to consider the bill.~~

~~*Tabled paper:* Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis Affordability) Amendment Bill 2017.~~

Tabled paper: Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis Affordability) Amendment Bill 2017, explanatory notes.

This bill will insert a new section 214A into the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Act 2016. This act, passed last year with bipartisan support of the crossbenches, will allow Queenslanders access to medicinal cannabis from 1 March. The problem is that no legal, locally produced products will be available by this date. As is often the case, for people requiring access now the wheels of government are not turning fast enough. These people have been reliant upon illegal black market options and there is no relief in sight. I call on the Queensland government to ensure affordable whole plant medicinal cannabis is made available in Queensland to patients now while a local industry under the Commonwealth licensing scheme further matures.

Currently there is no amnesty in Queensland for medicinal cannabis users. The Queensland Health website is quite clear on the matter. It states that Queensland does not have an amnesty scheme. It details that some jurisdictions have an amnesty approach or a compassionate use scheme. This gives police the discretion not to prosecute someone found in possession of cannabis if they are using it for medical reasons. This is a police discretionary power, not a full amnesty. It clearly states that this approach is not supported by the Queensland government. This is because in Queensland all patients receiving medicinal cannabis treatment may only use a lawfully obtained product. This is preferable to a compassionate use scheme because it provides access without supporting the illegal or black market cannabis industry; treatment is prescribed and monitored by a doctor rather than encouraging the patient to self-medicate; and the prescribed product used will be of known consistency and quality.

Medicinal cannabis use is only lawful when the cultivation, manufacture, prescribing and supply complies with all applicable Commonwealth and state and territory laws. Over time, medicinal cannabis supplies will be easier to access, removing the need for a compassionate use scheme. Here is the kicker: even the government's own website recognises a need for a compassionate use scheme. There is a need for easier access to medicinal cannabis here in Queensland. It is time that the Queensland government addresses this need. Why can't Queensland patients benefit from compassionate use while the government works with growers and producers on an Australian product that should be safe, reliable and legally available and affordable? It is not just the Queensland government that needs to take action; One Nation has also called on the Prime Minister to intervene and provide amnesty for users and suppliers of this vital lifesaving drug so that many people and families are no longer forced to do this in secret.

015 The Prime Minister has since come out and said that he does not support a medicinal cannabis amnesty. He said it would be irresponsible, because there are no controls over medicines bought outside the official channels. The only thing irresponsible is that the Australian government and the Queensland government have decided that, while we all wait for Australian companies to work through the lengthy and detailed process of obtaining the required permits and licences to legally grow, produce and distribute medicinal cannabis, they should sit back and provide no alternative for desperate patients and their families. That is what I believe is irresponsible.

It is irresponsible when you know that there are people out there in the community whom you are representing suffering because you are willing to sit back because you think that you have ticked all the boxes and change is just moving along. This time, that is simply not enough. I fail to understand how my fellow state and federal members of parliament are unwilling to provide real solutions and real relief while the wheels of legislative change are slowly turning in the background. I can assure members that the community expects better from all of us and the world is watching. I can assure members that, when people are faced with having to break a stupid and unconscionable law for the sake of their child's health, it is not really a hard decision for them.

An issue like amnesty for access to medicinal cannabis while the Queensland community awaits access to legally and locally produced medication deserves support from all of us in this chamber. This is where we should set aside our differences and act, because it is the right thing to do. It is the right thing to do by the parents of these children in need and the adults who are suffering daily, it is the right thing to do by the many advocates who have worked tirelessly and it is the right thing to do for all Queenslanders outside the media spotlight who are afraid of that knock on the door in the middle of the night. They should not have to live in fear of the police. They should not have to live in fear of being charged and having a criminal record. They should not have to live in fear of a police raid because the one medication that is helping their loved one is no longer available.

Members should also understand that, even though the laws will allow specialists to prescribe medicinal cannabis oil products to patients from March, families may not be able to afford it and the medications may not work as well as the ones they currently use. Local medicinal cannabis advocate

Steve Peek has estimated that it would cost \$7,000 a month to access Therapeutic Goods Administration approved cannabis medication from Canada and, even then, those products would still be different from the one that had been effective in treating his daughter, Suli. That is a very long and costly process to obtain overseas medication and how do you know that it is going to work? Mr Peek also fears that many doctors would refuse to prescribe the oil, like his daughter's specialist did, because of the lack of scientific evidence about its benefits. It is for Steve Peek and Queenslanders like him that we need to take action now to prevent any needless suffering.

This bill calls on the Queensland government and calls on the health minister to take steps to ensure that whole plant cannabis is affordable. This is something that can be achieved now. This is something that will make a meaningful difference to those who desperately require access to whole plant medicinal cannabis now.

If the government is seriously concerned that patients are treating themselves with powerful medicine sourced from the illicit market because there are no controls over the safety and quality of the medicine, how about utilising a government entity such as the CSIRO for the growing and manufacturing and/or testing of medicinal cannabis until commercial licences are in place? We can direct the police not to charge genuine medicinal cannabis users with drug related offences and stop raids on compassionate suppliers. We can work with the Australian government to ensure that there are no unnecessary restrictions on the importation of whole plant medicinal cannabis and we can look at subsidising treatment.

I implore all members to support this bill. I ask for unified support for some of those who are most in need in this state. I move that the bill be now be read a first time.

First Reading

Mr DICKSON (Buderim—ONP) (11.53 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.


Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee.

~~BAIL (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE) AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL~~

Introduction

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.54 am): ~~I present a bill for an act to amend the Bail Act 1980 and the Corrective Services Act 2008 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.~~

~~Tabled paper: Bail (Domestic Violence) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2017.~~

~~Tabled paper: Bail (Domestic Violence) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2017, explanatory notes.~~

~~Two weeks ago today, Teresa Bradford was tragically murdered by her estranged husband in her Pimpama home on the northern Gold Coast in front of her kids. In fact, today is the day of Teresa's funeral. I know that everyone in this place passes on their condolences and thoughts to her family and friends on this very sad occasion.~~

~~Teresa's attacker was released on bail only just weeks earlier following an unsuccessful attempt on her life late last year. It is a heart wrenching story that would have brought a tear to the eye of most Queenslanders but, sadly, it is not an isolated case. Last year, Queensland accounted for a quarter—just think of that, a quarter—of all domestic violence related deaths in Australia, with 18 Queensland women dying at the hands of their partner. We have heard time and time again from domestic violence victims and their families and support groups that something has to be done about dealing with this~~