

## **SECOND READING SPEECH**

### ***HEALTH PROFESSIONALS REGISTRATION (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 2009***

Mr Speaker

In 2008, COAG agreed to establish a National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for Health Professionals. The Scheme will transfer the responsibility for the registration and accreditation of health professionals to a central, national agency instead of each State and Territory having separate registration boards for each of the health professions.

For health professionals, the Scheme means that they will only need to register once to be able to practise throughout Australia, reducing red tape and enabling health professionals to move around the country more easily.

For the public, the Scheme provides greater safeguards while promoting a more flexible, responsive and sustainable health workforce. The new Scheme will maintain a public national register for each health profession that will ensure that a professional who has been banned from practising in one place is unable to practise elsewhere in Australia.

As Tasmania prepares to transition to the Scheme it is important that we ensure that the knowledge and skill we have on our existing registration boards can be carried over to the new, National Scheme. That is what the *Health Professionals Registration (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2009* seeks to do.

Under existing legislation, members of the Tasmanian health professional registration boards are only entitled to serve a limited number of terms on a board. This has ensured a turnover of board members to ensure that representation keeps pace with community expectations.

It means, however, that a number of key board members terms will expire between now and the introduction of the National Scheme. They will, as a result of existing provisions, be ineligible for reappointment to a board. Tasmania will therefore lose the significant skill and experience that they hold at a time where we most require it. Those board members are in the best position to represent Tasmania as we transition to the National Scheme.

The new national law establishing the Scheme makes provision for existing board members to transition to the new national boards. Our local legislation needs to make provision for the existing board members to remain, in the interim, to transition.

It is the Government's intention to repeal the existing health professionals registration Acts once we have transitioned to the new National Scheme. Until then, we need to ensure that it is possible to reappoint existing members should they seek re-nomination.

This Bill provides an interim mechanism for consistency while we prepare for the introduction of the National Scheme.

I commend the Bill to the House.