

SECOND READING SPEECH

Health Miscellaneous Bill 2024

Honourable Speaker

I am pleased to bring this Bill before the House.

The Bill makes several important technical changes to improve service delivery and regulatory flexibility, and modernise legislation.

The *Anatomical Examinations Act 2006* makes provision for anatomical examination of bodies of deceased persons to ensure that due regard is given to the dignity of deceased persons.

The Act defines *next of kin* for consent purposes. This definition defines Aboriginal person by reference to Commonwealth Legislation that has substantially changed with the abolition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission.

The Bill will amend this definition to align with the existing definition in the *Coroners Act 1995* so that when an Aboriginal person's family member is not available, a person who is an appropriate person according to the customs and tradition of the community to which the deceased person belonged, is the appropriate next of kin.

Honourable Speaker, this is an important step in recognising indigenous kinship relationships and ensuring that Aboriginal cultural traditions are respected.

The Bill also makes amendments to the *Food Act 2003*. These include clarifying that an order or notice issued under the Food Act to a mobile food business applies throughout the State. This removes any ambiguity about the application of orders or notices. Another amendment will increase regulatory flexibility by enabling the term 'public institution' to be further defined by regulation.

In July 2023, the *Pharmacist Scope of Practice Review* recommended that the Government examine options to expand pharmacists' scope of practice.

The review found that the Tasmanian healthcare system would benefit from better utilisation of healthcare professionals.

Through expanding the scope of practice of pharmacists in Tasmania, there is an opportunity to better utilise the important skills and knowledge held by those professionals.

Work in this area is already underway, with the ongoing Pharmacists UTI, and Oral Contraceptive Pill Prescribing Programs being successfully delivered across the State.

Honourable Speaker, the amendments to the *Poisons Act 1971* in this Bill ensure that pharmacists in Tasmania can continue to deliver important services in the community by making it more streamlined to endorse pharmacists practising in accordance with approved clinical protocols as authorised health professionals to prescribe certain medicines, thereby expanding their scope of practice.

This change will make access to important medicines from pharmacists easier for the community.

In addition the definition of *prohibited plant* has been amended to include 'fungi'.

This will enable the Minister to determine whether any fungi should be included as a prohibited plant for the purpose of cultivation for medical purposes.

Honourable Speaker, the Bill also makes a consequential amendment to the Poisons Act following structural changes to the Australian Government's Standard for the Uniform Scheduling of Medicines and Poisons.

Finally, the Bill repeals the *Optometry Offences Act 2010* and the *Mental Health (Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Act 2013*, and revokes the *Tasmanian Health Organisations (Tasmanian Health Service) Order 2015*.

The Optometry Offences Act is now considered redundant. All other Australian jurisdictions have repealed similar legislation as the appropriate regulation of optometrists is conducted by Ahpra.

The Mental Health (Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Act and Tasmanian Health Organisations (Tasmanian Health Service) Order have both become redundant over the passage of time and no longer serve any purpose.

I acknowledge the support of this Bill by key stakeholders and look forward to working together to improve and protect the health of Tasmanians into the future.

I commend the Bill to the House.