

18 March 2019

Education, Employment and Small Business Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

By email only: eesbc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Committee,

Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019

Cancer Council Queensland offers its strong support for the *Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019 (Bill)*, and welcomes this opportunity to provide its feedback to the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee (**Committee**).

About Cancer Council Queensland

One Queenslanders will be diagnosed with cancer every 20 minutes. Cancer Council Queensland is dedicated to improving quality of life for people living with cancer, through research, patient care, prevention and early detection.

Our employees, volunteers, and supporters are at the heart of our work – driving our vision for a cancer free future.

We were established in 1961 as the Queensland Cancer Fund, in response to an increasing need for cancer-related services across the state. This year, we are celebrating 58 years of supporting Queenslanders, affected by cancer.

Today, we employ about 200 employees statewide and have more than 1300 registered volunteers. Thousands of Queenslanders donate and volunteer for us each day, helping us to improve cancer control. We have nine offices statewide and operate six accommodation lodges providing regional cancer patients with a home-away-from-home when they access lifesaving treatment services in Queensland's major cities.

We are a member of Cancer Council Australia and work in global affiliation with the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC).

Background to this Bill

The establishment of a health promotion commission has been considered twice by committees of the Queensland Parliament:

- On 16 September 2015 the House referred an inquiry into the establishment of a Queensland Health Promotion Commission to the Health and Ambulance Services Committee for consideration. In June 2016, the Committee tabled its report (number 21, 55th Parliament); and
- On 23 May 2017, the House referred the *Healthy Futures Commission Queensland Bill 2017* to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee for consideration. The Committee tabled its report in July 2017 (number 40, 55th Parliament), but that Bill lapsed when Parliament was prorogued.

Cancer Council Queensland made submissions to both inquiries (which are available on the Parliament's website). We supported *'the establishment of the Commission as an independent statutory body to support the capacity of children and families to adopt a healthy lifestyle and to contribute to reducing health inequity for children and families,'* and recommended that the Commission adopt the definition of health promotion codified in the World Health Organisation's *Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion*, which focuses on the need to:

- Build Healthy Public Policy
- Create Supportive Environments
- Strengthen Community Actions
- Develop Personal Skills
- Reorient Health Services
- Move into the Future

Support for the establishment of Health and Wellbeing Queensland

Cancer Council Queensland supports the establishment of Health and Wellbeing Queensland as an independent statutory body to support the capacity of children and families to adopt a healthy lifestyle and to contribute to reducing health inequity for disadvantaged and marginalised groups across Queensland.

We also welcome Health and Wellbeing Queensland's intention to reduce health inequity by investing in innovative projects and local community partnerships to create environments that support Queenslanders' health and wellbeing.

We endorse Health and Wellbeing Queensland's goals to engage sectors outside the health system, identify key leverage points and facilitate new opportunities to improve health; build capacity by developing individual skills, thereby strengthening community action and enabling organisations to create healthy environments and empower Queenslanders, and; reduce inequity through addressing the differences in health status in the community by

recognising and responding to the needs of those groups whose health is poorest, and who are most likely to have limited opportunities to be healthy.

The need for an independent statutory agency

In our view, there is great value in creating an independent statutory agency to perform this important function.

We endorse the comments in the Bill's explanatory notes, that the establishment of a statutory body will allow Health and Wellbeing Queensland to:

- be empowered to act as a champion for change that is well placed to coordinate efforts across diverse sectors, and foster the innovative thinking required to support individual, community and environmental changes needed to reduce health inequities;
- help to strengthen linkages across sectors involved in illness prevention and health promotion, promote better alignment between federal, state and local jurisdictions and increase shared responsibility across the sectors; and
- facilitate the growing expectation for a new public health movement that focuses on building the capacity of people and communities to be a key force for social change in matters of health and wellbeing.

The Explanatory Notes also state that the statutory body model will enable:

- stronger accountability and transparency as a separate legal entity;
- an ability for Health and Wellbeing Queensland to develop activities in partnership with organisations from outside the government sector;
- Health and Wellbeing Queensland to control its own funds and have greater flexibility for resourcing;
- authority and leadership to engage a variety of stakeholders across government and the community with a common focus;
- a greater focus on Health and Wellbeing Queensland's objectives, functions and long-term organisational goals rather than as part of a broader department's strategic or operational plans;
- a greater level of collaboration across government portfolios; and
- direct reporting to a Minister rather than through a department.

In our view, there is a critical need to support greater collaboration across government departments/agencies, particularly outside the Health portfolio area, and a separate, independent statutory agency should be able to gain greater traction across Government (supported by mechanisms in the Bill, including appointing up to four board members that are chief executives of government departments [clause 18]). In addition, an independent statutory agency will be able to build strong relationships with external organisations, including non-government organisations like Cancer Council Queensland, and could raise funds from non-government sources to complement and support its work (see Part 7, Div 2).

Independent planning and goal-setting will allow a clear focus on health promotion and prevention of disease, while the Department can focus on whole-of-system oversight of Queensland's health services system.

Focus on health and wellbeing

The objective of Health and Wellbeing Queensland (clause 10) includes reducing the burden of chronic diseases through targeting risk factors for those diseases, and reducing health inequity. The Bill provides examples of risk factors, including '*poor nutrition, low physical activity, (and) obesity*'. Addressing these risk factors are consistent with Government's objective to increase the proportion of Queenslanders with a healthy body weight by 10 per cent by 2026, set out in ***Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities***.

64 per cent of Queensland adults (and about 26 per cent of the state's children) are overweight or obese, affecting both short and long term health and strongly increasing the risk of chronic diseases, and some cancers. In fact, there are 14 cancer types associated with overweight/obesity.

Around one quarter of all cancer cases can be prevented through eating a healthy diet and being physically active. Evidence suggests that maintaining a healthy weight throughout life is one of the most important ways to protect against many types of cancer. Collectively, being overweight or obese, being physically inactive, and eating unhealthily are second only to tobacco as preventable risk factors for cancer.

The recommend daily intake is two serves of fruit and five serves of vegetables, and currently only **57 per cent of adults** in Queensland are eating enough fruit. Only seven per cent are meeting the recommend daily intake of vegetables, increasing their risk of certain cancers.

While 70 per cent of children are eating enough fruit, shockingly, only four per cent are meeting the recommend daily intake for vegetables, leaving their growing bodies lacking in the required nutrition.

Recent data suggests that 18 per cent of bowel cancer cases could be prevented if we ate enough dietary fibre.

Research released in February 2019 shows that over 200,000 cancer cases could be avoided in Australia over the next 25 years if all Australian adults maintained a healthy weight and met the physical activity guidelines for cancer prevention.

These statistics all point to the need to focus on addressing Queenslanders' nutrition and physical activity, and we support Health and Wellbeing Queensland's strong focus on these areas.

Other risk factors

We welcome Health and Wellbeing Queensland's focus on particular risk factors, and on the imperative to support more Queenslanders reach, and maintain, a healthy body weight. However, Cancer Council Queensland will continue to work with Queensland Health and other partners to address other

important risk factors that need to be considered in preventative health to address cancer, including:

- **Sun Protection:** Queensland has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Most skin cancers, including melanoma, are caused by over-exposure to ultraviolet (**UV**) radiation from the sun or artificial sources, such as solariums.
- **Tobacco Reduction:** Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and disease, including cancer, in the developed world. In Australia, smoking causes around one in five cancer deaths, which includes more than 3400 deaths in Queensland each year.
- **Occupational and environmental risks:** There are some occupational hazards (where you work) and environmental hazards (where you live) that can increase your risk of certain cancers:
 - **Occupational cancers** are those that occur due to exposure to carcinogenic (cancer-causing) agents in the workplace. Approximately 3.6 million Australians could be exposed to one or more carcinogens at work; this exposure is estimated to cause over 5000 new cases of cancer in Australia each year.
 - **Environmental cancers:** Potential environmental hazards that may occur in the home or public places include home renovations and DIY, second-hand smoke and UV radiation.
- **Cancer screening:** One in two Queenslanders will develop cancer before the age of 85. However, treatment can be more successful when cancer is found early. Finding cancer early increases your chances of survival. There are three national cancer screening programs: National Bowel Cancer Screening Program, BreastScreen Australia and the National Cervical Screening Program.

We welcome confirmation that Queensland Health will continue to maintain focus on these important priorities, allowing Health and Wellbeing Queensland to prioritise risk factors and inequities that focus on addressing overweight and obesity.

The Bill

The Bill establishes the legislative framework, powers, and governance structures for the establishment of Health and Wellbeing Queensland, and improves on the model contained in the previous *Healthy Futures Commission Queensland Bill 2017*.

The constitution of the ten-member board, which allows for representation from across Government and includes an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representative (clause 18(4)), will coordinate and drive integration across sectors, with multi-sectoral collaboration to develop sustainable and supportive environments and outreach.

Health and Wellbeing Queensland will be able to engage staff (clause 40) and facilitate and commission activities to prevent illness and promote health and wellbeing (clause 11(1)(a)). It will be able to develop partnerships and

collaborate with other entities (clause 11(1)(b)), and provide grants to other organisations to further its objectives (clause 11(1)(c)). Further, it will be able to conduct research and monitor/evaluate activities (clause 11(1)(d)) and provide advice to the Minister about preventing illness and promoting health and wellbeing (clause 11(1)(f)), including undertaking specific research as directed by the Minister (clause 14).

The effectiveness of Health and Wellbeing Queensland will rely on its approach to undertaking these functions, in partnership with Government departments and agencies, community organisations, industry and the broader community. In our view, the Bill outlines appropriate objectives, and proposes an enabling structure and governance.

We look forward to working with Health and Wellbeing Queensland to implement its important goals, and welcome the formation of this statutory agency, and the *Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019*. If you have any questions about this submission, please contact James Farrell, our General Manager, Advocacy, on (07) 3634 5444 or jamesfarrell@cancerqld.org.au.

Yours sincerely,



Chris McMillan
Chief Executive Officer
Cancer Council Queensland