

20 March 2019

Committee Secretary
Education, Employment and Small Business Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

[Email: EESBC@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:EESBC@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Dear Committee Secretary,

Re: Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019

QCOSS is the state-wide peak body representing the interest of individuals experiencing or at risk of experiencing poverty and disadvantage, and organisations working in the social and community service sector. For 60 years, QCOSS has been a leading force for social change to build social and economic wellbeing for all people in Queensland.

QCOSS believes equality, opportunity, and wellbeing is critical for every person regardless of their circumstances. We are therefore pleased to welcome the introduction of the Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019 and particularly its intent to reduce health inequities across Queensland.

It is well known that the health and wellbeing in our community varies based on a person's access to education, employment, housing, wealth, and where they live. Our 2016 report, Queensland's Wellbeing¹, highlighted the interconnected nature of poor health outcomes with indicators of socio-economic disadvantage. The root causes of poor health outcomes are systemic and many of the factors that influence health and wellbeing sit outside the scope of the current health system.

The current system is fragmented with gaps between major service areas such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Hospital and Health Services, and community mental health programs. Too many Queenslanders requiring person-centred psychosocial supports continue to fall through these gaps. Improved health outcomes can only be achieved with a holistic

¹ Link: <https://www.qcoss.org.au/qcoss-queenslands-wellbeing-2016-report>

framework between the levels of government, across government departments, community services, industry groups, and local communities.

The shift in Queensland to the local management of Hospital and Health Services has supported locally led service delivery. The opportunity that exists with the establishment of the Health and Wellbeing Queensland is to connect this local service delivery with statewide strategic oversight that can take a holistic view and enact the systems change required to ensure that the delivery of health services in Queensland achieves the best possible outcomes for Queenslanders.

Queensland is the most decentralised state in Australia, with 51 per cent of our population living outside of the South East across 1.83 million square kilometres. In recognition of this distance and diversity, partnerships with local communities are essential to develop tailored, place-based strategies that understand and respond to local need. As the peak body for the community service sector in Queensland, QCOSS is committed to supporting the development of place-based approaches that harness the vision, resources and opportunities of communities who understand their own local challenges and needs.

Community service organisations play a fundamental role in supporting our community members made vulnerable by the systems in place. These services are the backbone of place-based initiatives and are well placed to provide insights into the systemic issues contributing to poor health outcomes for thousands of Queenslanders. Upon establishment, QCOSS urges Health and Wellbeing Queensland to meaningfully engage with these services and the broader community to hear their voices and listen to their expertise and experience to achieve positive, sustainable differences to the health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders.

To achieve its outcomes, Health and Wellbeing Queensland will require good governance. This will mean a board with a range of expertise and lived experience including people of different cultures, people with a disability and mental health experience.

We look forward to working with Health and Wellbeing Queensland to achieve equality, opportunity and wellbeing for every Queenslanders.

Yours sincerely



Mark Henley
Chief Executive Officer