



QUEENSLAND EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND  
SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

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# HEALTH AND WELLBEING QUEENSLAND BILL 2019

SUBMISSION

20 March 2019



## ABOUT ACSA

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Aged & Community Services Australia (ACSA) is the leading national aged care peak body supporting over 700 church, charitable and community-based, not-for-profit organisations throughout Queensland and around the nation. Not-for-profit organisations provide care and accommodation services to about one million older Australians.<sup>1</sup>

ACSA represents, leads and supports its members to achieve excellence in providing quality affordable housing and community and residential care services for older Australians.

Aged care providers make a significant \$17.6 billion economic contribution to Australia, representing 1.1% of GDP by producing outputs, employing people and through buying goods and services. The direct economic component is akin to the contribution made by the residential building construction and sheep, grains, beef and dairy cattle industries.<sup>2</sup> In many regional and rural areas aged care is the largest employer, which is where the majority, if not all, providers are not-for-profit.

Mission-based and other not-for-profit organisations are responsible for providing services to the most disadvantaged and are a critical part of the social fabric of local communities – not only for the essential care and support they provide – but also as a valuable generator of jobs and growth.

ACSA members are important to the community and the people they serve and are passionate about the quality and value of the services they provide, irrespective of their size, service mix or location.

## ACSA CONTACT

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### **Trevor Lovelle**

Executive Director, ACSA  
PO Box 1346, Milton QLD 4064  
0408 230 763  
[Trevor.Lovelle@acsa.asn.au](mailto:Trevor.Lovelle@acsa.asn.au)

### **Christopher Hampton**

State Government Relations Manager, ACSA  
0409 511 037  
[Christopher.Hampton@acsa.asn.au](mailto:Christopher.Hampton@acsa.asn.au)

[www.acsa.asn.au](http://www.acsa.asn.au)

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Government, Department of Health, 2016-17 Report on the Operation of the *Aged Care Act 1997*, November 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Deloitte Access Economics, Australia's aged care sector: economic contribution and future directions, Aged Care Guild, June 2016, page 24.

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### INTRODUCTION

On 28 February 2019 the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services introduced the Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019 into the Queensland Parliament. The Bill was referred to the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee for detailed consideration.

The explanatory notes state that the objective of the Bill is to establish a health promotion agency, to be known as Health and Wellbeing Queensland (HWQ), as a statutory body. HWQ will contribute to:

- improving the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders;
- reducing the risk factors associated with chronic disease; and
- reducing health inequities.

The explanatory notes describe the proposed functions of the HWQ, which are to:

- facilitate and commission activities to prevent illness or promote health and wellbeing
- develop partnerships and collaborate across government and with organisations such as businesses, industry organisations, community organisations, academics, local governments and individuals to further its objective or carry out its functions
- give grants for activities to further its objectives or carry out its functions
- monitor and evaluate activities to prevent illness or promote health and wellbeing
- develop policy and advise the Minister and government entities, about illness prevention or promotion of health and wellbeing, and
- coordinate the exchange of information about activities to prevent illness or promote health and wellbeing.

The Bill also amends the Hospital Foundations Act 2018 to enable the establishment of a foundation to support HWQ in achieving its objectives.

### ACSA RECOMMENDATIONS

Whilst Health and Wellbeing Queensland is looking at improving the health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders, ACSA believes that HWQ has a unique opportunity to focus on aged care to promote healthy ageing and illness prevention. ACSA looks forward to working with HWQ on these initiatives.

ACSA contributed to the Queensland Department of Health's *Older Persons Health Care Strategy* in 2017 and 2018 and substantive parts of our submission are relevant to HWQ.

- Health services which focus on maintaining wellness or reablement of older persons is an important component of a health system which professes to support 'healthy ageing'. The focus on ensuring the health system is based on preventive, holistic, person-centred health care supports the wellness approach is essential.
- It is well recognised that the 'transition points of care' are risk points for consumers of health services. In the context of older persons, transition points between multiple services are high risk points and often occur between residential aged care, acute care and community pharmacy interfaces. A Queensland health system that is focused on safeguarding consumers across these transition points is vital.

- It is important all older persons have access to Queensland’s health services when needed in a timely manner, regardless of whether they live in their own home in the community, in retirement villages or in residential aged care services.

Potential benefits of the implementation of this include:

- A reduction in the demand on Queensland hospital resources by decreasing the duration and number of unplanned presentations and admissions to hospital.
- A decrease in the burden on residential aged care services where there is minimal palliative care funding coupled with a lack of skilled staff to meet the future demand for aged care.

ACSA envisages the four strategic directions in the *Older persons Health Care Strategy* would result in positive outcomes for both older persons and in turn, the Queensland health system and potentially lead to:

- An increase in the choice of, and access to, available health services for older persons.
- An increase in collaboration between providers of health services to achieve a more streamlined approach from hospital to home to residential aged care.
- A reduction in the unplanned presentations at hospital reducing the demand on emergency department resources.
- Older persons receiving holistic health services that are focused on their whole health.
- Higher participation in health protection activities due to prevention and early detection initiatives.

## **OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **ORAL HEALTH**

- Creating an effective interface between oral health and aged care is crucial. There are clear links between poor oral and poor general health. Oral health funding should be specifically allocated for older people living in residential aged care, and a stronger focus is needed on prevention prior to older people entering care to keep them well and independent for longer. Strengthening the interface with the home support and care systems is critical

### **HEALTH AND AGED CARE PROJECT**

- Older people staying healthy and independent longer is good for the individual and for the state. Governments need to collaborate and resource the aged-care sector as key partners to control the future costs of acute health. Reducing avoidable hospital admissions would make a positive impact on reducing State Government health costs.
- In ACSA’s pre-budget submission for the upcoming 2019-20 Queensland Budget, ACSA requested the provision of \$500,000 from the State Government over the next 3 years for a “Health & Aged Care Project – strengthening the interface and building collaboration” with a key measure being reducing avoidable hospital admissions from residential and home-based aged care.