



20 March 2019

Sue Cawcutt
Committee Secretary
Education, Employment and Small Business Committee
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Professor Ross Young

Executive Dean

Re: Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019

Dear Ms Cawcutt,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019 (Bill).

QUT welcomes the proposal by the Queensland Government to establish an independent statutory authority for health promotion, prevention of chronic disease and reducing inequity across Queensland communities. We note this is consistent with international recommendations from the International Network of Health Promotion Foundations (<https://inhpf.net/2018/02/08/governance/>).

As a University, QUT has a longstanding commitment to working with communities to improve the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders. QUT continues to perform a strategic role in building healthy communities across Queensland through our real-world research and collaborative approaches to teaching and learning. We welcome further opportunities to collaborate with Government in building a healthy Queensland.

Enclosed in the following pages are our comments in response to the proposed Bill:

- recommendations on the policy objectives;
- clarification of the ministerial role;
- recommendations for specific activities ensuring the effectiveness and return on investment for programs;
- recommendations for staffing and board composition; and
- endorsement of overarching themes and direction for the entity.

Should you require further information, please contact Dr John Byron, Director of Government Relations and Policy at QUT, on telephone 0410 557 157 or by email at john.byron@qut.edu.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ross Young', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Professor Ross Young
Executive Dean
Faculty of Health
Queensland University of Technology

Queensland University of Technology
Submission to the Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019

We encourage Health and Wellbeing Queensland to create policies and programs that are based on contemporary and high quality evidence, as a collaboration between front-line health practitioners, academia, community and non-health sectors. The proposed functions of the HWQ recognise the value of a cross-sectoral approach to preventing chronic diseases and reducing health inequities. These should encompass areas such as human services, housing, transport, crime and safety, environment, and employment to comprehensively address the breadth of health social determinants. Further, we emphasise the importance of this cross-sectoral approach taking place throughout the policy and program development pipeline, including co-design, implementation and evaluation. This approach for collaboration will produce a greater efficacy of policies and programs, such as by translating research outcomes for implementation by locally adapting this evidence to a Queensland community context.

With this in mind, we recommend some alterations to the wording of the proposed Bill:

Division 2 Objective, functions and powers

10 Objective, add two additional objectives:

- (c) through evidence-informed strategies identified through trustworthy research as effective, safe and of high value for money.

Example of evidence-informed strategy –

Using systematic reviews of strategies demonstrating programs and implementation strategies are likely to be effective in increasing physical activity.

And:

- (d) program evaluation of the commissioned activities to assess the level of implementation and determine whether the anticipated outcomes of addressing identified risk factors were achieved.

11 Functions (1), add specific wording as indicated by red font below:

- (a) to facilitate and commission research-informed activities to prevent illness and promote health and wellbeing;

And:

- (d) to monitor and evaluate the implementation and sustainability of activities to prevent illness and promote health and wellbeing;

Ministerial directions

Section 13: We recommend the addition of the following subsections:

- (4) Other than specified in Section 14, directions given by the Minister under subsection (1) must be of a general nature only, and, in particular, the Minister is not entitled to direct Health and Wellness Queensland to recommend the allocation of research funds to a particular person or organisation;

And:

- (5) Particulars of any directions given by the Minister under subsection (1) must be tabled in the Parliament within 15 sitting days after the direction is given.

We also have some remarks around the framing and implementation of Health and Wellbeing Queensland's mission:

Effectiveness of Health and Wellbeing Queensland activities:

We note the role of the proposed Health and Wellbeing Queensland in providing grants to support chronic disease prevention action in Queensland. We encourage the following to be considered in the provision of these grants:

- That funded organisations are supported with capacity building either provided or supported by Health and Wellbeing Queensland. This would ensure that organisations have required staff, skills and resources to support the development, implementation and evaluation of health promotion approaches which are effective and locally appropriate. Further, this would enable sustainability of approaches to be integrated into the community context.
- Ongoing evaluation of short, medium and long term outcomes of all projects should be integrated into the way Health and Wellbeing Queensland would work. This extends beyond metrics of funded projects. It would complement the Chief Health Officer's report to demonstrate both effective and ineffective health promotion approaches for improving the health of Queensland communities. This evaluation work represents the skills and priorities of QUT and we welcome an opportunity to discuss this further.
- QUT's Faculty of Health, School of Public Health and Social Works is currently undertaking a national research project on sustaining chronic disease prevention health promotion approaches. The findings of this work are currently being prepared and we look forward to an opportunity to present and discuss this work to inform the actions of Health and Wellbeing Queensland.

Staffing and Board composition:

- We note in Queensland Health's written briefing to the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee that a maximum of four Chief Executives from other Departments can be represented on the Board. We commend the recognition that the health of Queenslanders extends well beyond the reach of the Department of Health alone. We stress the need for this approach to extend into the policies and outputs of other Departments. This means that other Departments should also recognise and play an active role in building healthy communities
(<https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/committees/EESBC/2019/HealthWellbeing/cor-11March2019-Health.pdf>).
- We positively acknowledge the inclusion of at least one member of the Board to be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and further encourage employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and the creation of a culturally safe environment within Health and Wellbeing Queensland.

- Given the stark and alarming contrast in health between urban, regional and rural Queensland communities, we recommend inclusion of a specified Board representative from regional and rural Queensland to ensure the work of Health and Wellbeing Queensland extends truly Statewide. We further recommend the inclusion of expertise on the Board and staff of Health and Wellbeing Queensland, to represent the needs of diverse cultural groups in Queensland.
- We refer to the recommendations of the International Union for Health Promotion and Education for non-communicable diseases and note the importance of a skilled health promotion workforce within Health and Wellbeing Queensland, Queensland Health and other sectors of Government and community organisations (https://www.iuhpe.org/images/IUHPE/Advocacy/IUHPE_NCDs_positionstatement.pdf). This is an area QUT is prepared to assist with through our graduate and professional programs.

Overarching themes and direction of a health promotion entity:

We strongly suggest the approaches to systems thinking be embraced by Health and Wellbeing Queensland to reflect global direction for health promotion. This recognises the need for strong collaboration across sectors and the integration of health promotion into the systems of Queensland organisations and communities. This is a genuinely collaborative approach that extends far beyond simply funding projects with multiple partners.

- We note the importance of Health and Wellbeing Queensland taking an integrated approach to addressing the social determinants of health. This would include the representation of Government Departments other than Health on the Board as noted and integrated in any policy, position and plans of other Government Departments. This reaches beyond funded projects and requires a whole of Government approach.
- We further believe that mental health, physical health, social wellbeing, the environment and economic wellbeing must be viewed holistically as interconnected elements if there is to be any real progress towards achieving the Bill's stated aims of a) reducing the burden of chronic diseases and b) reducing health inequity. The Ottawa Charter (WHO, 1986) recognises the importance of the inclusion of the health of the natural environment as the basis of health promotion. It notes the inextricable links between people and their environment and constitutes the basis for a socio-ecological approach to health. This includes the conservation of natural resources throughout the world and should be emphasised as a global responsibility. We recommend that this approach be adopted by Health and Wellbeing Queensland.
- We again note the recommendations of the IUHPE stated above and encourage the development of a State-based overarching plan for chronic disease prevention which spans long term (potentially more than 10 years). This would help coordinate chronic disease prevention collaboratively and collectively across the State and provide short, medium and long term targets for collective action and ongoing evaluation.