

Health Consumers Queensland submission

Queensland Parliament
Education, Employment and Small Business Committee

Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019

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About us

Health Consumers Queensland is the peak organisation representing the interests of health consumers and carers in the state. Health Consumers Queensland is a not-for-profit organisation and a registered health promotion charity and we believe in improving health outcomes for people in Queensland.

Consumers are people who use, or are potential users, of health services including their family and carers. Consumers may participate as individuals, groups, organizations of consumers, consumer representatives or communities.

Our priority focus is on consumer engagement that influences and leads improvements and delivers better health outcomes for all Queenslanders. We achieve this through our Queensland-wide health consumer network, tailored training and skills development programs, and maximising opportunities for consumer representation at all levels of the health system.

Consumer engagement is when health consumers actively participate in their own healthcare and in health policy, planning, service delivery and evaluation at service and agency levels.



Our Six Strategic Objectives

1. Enabling health consumers and healthcare staff statewide

We build consumer, staff and system capacity to design a health system together through collaborative, integrated and consumer-centred approaches by providing support, strategic advice, training and advocacy.

2. Acting as an agent of change for consumer-centred health care

In partnership with consumers and healthcare staff, we act as a strong voice on system wide issues to influence key decision makers, policies and models of care to deliver a high quality consumer-centred health care system for all Queenslanders.

3. Enhancing effective partnerships

We develop and grow effective organisational partnerships locally, nationally and internationally to achieve consumer-centred health care for all Queenslanders.

4. Building and using evidence

We support consumers and staff to be involved in co-creating the evidence base for health system development and transformation. We act on the evidence of the human lived experience of the health system to build capacity of consumers and to leverage system change.

5. Being transparent and enduring

We demonstrate transparency and responsiveness on behalf of consumers, community and our funders. We maintain strong leadership and governance to assure organisational sustainability and longevity. We support the passion, energy and courage of our staff and members of our Network.

6. Addressing the social determinants of health

We acknowledge that systemic reform of the health system requires recognising the social determinants of health and co-designing models of care that address them.

Areas of Focus

Our areas of focus in implementing our strategic objectives

In partnership with consumers (including vulnerable groups) and staff, we act as a strong voice on system wide issues such as:

- **Healthcare Rights:** Breaches of healthcare rights which prevent fair, just and affordable access to healthcare;
- **Quality & Safety:** Where quality and safety and/or consumer experiences are of concern;
- **Healthcare Standards:** Embedding healthcare standards around consumer engagement, comprehensive care and health literacy; or
- **Systemic Issues:** Complex, difficult or contentious systemic issues.

Introduction

Our organisation welcomes the opportunity to provide an organisational response to this Bill.

Health Consumers Queensland made a submission in 2017 for the Healthy Futures Commission Queensland Bill 2017 and prior to that provided a submission to the Inquiry into the establishment of a Queensland Health Promotion Commission in 2015. As an organisation that represents health consumers and carers across Queensland, we have always been supportive of a health promotion agency. Our CEO Melissa Fox is a member of the Health and Wellbeing Queensland Advisory Committee, providing high level strategic advice on how to best involve consumers to maximise the impact of the new body.

We support the aims of the health promotion agency, to be known as Health and Wellbeing Queensland (HWQ), as a statutory body and that it will contribute to:

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

Our submission covers our support for this agency and some recommendations that will help with governance, independence, transparent decision-making, and ensuring there is clarity of roles and responsibilities.

Our submission is focused on these consumer-focused principles of person-centred, integrated health care:

- Accessibility - safe, affordable and high quality services, treatments, preventative care and health promotion activities.
- Respect - healthcare that meets consumers' unique needs, preferences and values
- Choice – a responsive health system which ensures consumer choices in prevention, treatment and management options
- Participation - patient involvement in health policy to ensure that policies are designed with the patient at the centre.

Recommendations

The recommendations we've made in previous submissions on this still stand (see attached) and below are some additional recommendations we make for this submission:

Recommendation 1:

The Bill should require a Community and Consumer Engagement Strategy and Implementation Plan across all activities, similar to the legislation for the Hospital and Health Services (HHS) Boards. In addition, there should be a requirement for this to be regularly reported on and evaluated.

Recommendation 2:

If a grant program is run from Health and Wellbeing Queensland (HWQ), that there is a transparent and reportable involvement of consumers and community in the governance of the program and in the decision making.

This must include funding applicants demonstrating how they have partnered with consumers and the community to identify needs (based upon evidence), targets and strategies, and will involve them in the implementation and evaluation of their projects.

There needs to be local knowledge and/or consultation involved including on the grant assessment panel to ensure that regional/local specific projects meet the needs of that community and don't unnecessarily replicate/duplicate other programs already successfully running. Local leadership involvement on the panel would best be able to assess whether the winning grants will add value to the community.

Community readiness: We recommend that adequate preparatory work is undertaken with community-based organisations and communities so they are "ready" to plan, develop, implement and evaluate successful place-based, local solutions with strong local involvement. Building community capacity so there are the people, processes and resources to apply and implement the programs of change is essential. Consideration also needs to be given to ensure that the grant program doesn't unnecessarily disadvantage communities with strong demand for health promotion but with low capacity to apply for or implement grants. Community readiness is one way to address this but a systems review to ensure there is equity and fairness in decision-making is important for transparency and community buy-in.

Recommendation 3

In addition to the multi-sector approach that HWQ will take to improve health and wellbeing, we also recommend a cross-government advisory group be established. In order to adequately address the social determinants of health, it will need the proactive support of other key government departments working towards common goals to achieve success.

Recommendation 4

Develop, in collaboration with consumers and communities, a Partnerships Framework with clear protocols and criteria to ensure there are no conflicts of interest when HWQ uses flexible funding models to source private and non-government revenue streams such as corporate partnerships and sponsorships, that there are clear, robust guidelines to ensure there is no conflict of interest, and that it would pass the so-called "pub test".

Recommendation 5

Clarify connections and relationships between Health and Wellbeing Queensland and with the Chief Health Officer, the new Chief Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Officer, HHS Chief Executives, Queensland Mental Health Commission, other key state/federal government agencies and Primary Health Networks.

Conclusion

Health Consumers Queensland supports the proposed Health and Wellbeing Bill 2019. We look forward to continuing to support its work, as the future of Queensland will be shaped by the health and wellbeing of its people at all stages of the health continuum.

Health Consumers Queensland submission

Healthy Futures Commission Queensland Bill 2017

Queensland Parliament

Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention
Committee

26 June 2017

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About Health Consumers Queensland

Health Consumers Queensland's mission is to support the voices of Queensland health consumers to achieve better health outcomes. We are a registered health promotion charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission and aim to strengthen the consumer perspective in health policy development and system reform and design.

Health Consumers Queensland defines consumers as people who use, or are potential users, of health services including their family and carers. Consumers may participate as individuals, groups, organisations of consumers, consumer representatives or communities.

Health Consumers Queensland believes consumers should be central to all decisions that impact on their health care options and advocates for consumer involvement in health policy, planning and service delivery at local, state and national levels.

Health Consumers Queensland fully supports the delivery of consumer-centred, integrated healthcare that fully promotes the consumer's active participation in their healthcare and broader health services and systems.

Health Consumers Queensland's Response

Health Consumers Queensland provided a submission to the *Inquiry into the establishment of a Queensland Healthy Futures Commission Queensland* in 2015.

We commended the Queensland Government for its decision to establish a Healthy Futures Commission Queensland.

Further, we welcome the opportunity to provide a consumer and community perspective on the *Healthy Futures Commission Queensland Bill 2017*.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

Health literacy is about how people understand information about health and health care, and how we apply that information to our lives, use it to make decisions and act on it (source: *Australian Commission on Safety & Quality in Health Care*). Health literacy is important, it translates to more efficient use of the health system, and reduces wastage within the health system.

The revised National Standards on Safety and Quality in Health Care (to be released in November 2017 and against which hospital and health services will be accredited from January 2019) will require hospitals and health services to demonstrate how they are increasing health literacy for consumers, carers and staff.

The Commission's initiatives must be focused on helping Queenslanders be better able to find, understand and apply health information, and therefore be more active in our own health outcomes. This will enable prevention and early intervention by supporting consumers to take greater responsibility for our health especially around obesity, physical activity, substance use and occupational violence.

Recommendation 2:

In order to maximise impact of the Commission upon improving health outcomes for Queenslanders, its work and that of the innovative projects it funds must be designed, delivery, evaluated and monitored using a collaborative, open, robust process with health consumers, carers and health consumer/carer organisations including condition specific organisations and Health Consumers Queensland.

This Bill must ensure that community partnerships and consumer and carer participation is meaningfully embedded in the organisation at all levels (including Board representation and a Consumer/Carer Advisory Council with diverse representation including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, regional and remote communities, other communities affected by socioeconomic disadvantage, LGBTI communities, mental health consumers and carers) from its inception.

Similar to the legislation governing Hospital and Health Services, **the Bill should require the timely development of a comprehensive Consumer and Community Engagement Strategy and Implementation Plan across all levels of the organisation and all activities, which the Commission is required to resource appropriately** eg. staff responsible for supporting engagement activities, training for staff and consumers, budget to remunerate/reimburse consumers for their time and out-of-pocket costs. This work should also be reflected in the Business Case that goes to Cabinet. Health Consumers Queensland would welcome the opportunity to support the development and implementation of the Business Case, Consumer and Community Engagement Strategy and Implementation Plan.

Recommendation 3:

Communities are the experts in their own health and wellbeing. The Commission's grants programme should provide a mechanism to link communities with organisations who can support them to develop their own innovative and effective responses to health issues that disproportionately impact on them.

As per the above recommendation, the Commission's **grant program must also require consumer and community participation be embedded at every stage.**

Consumers should be integrated into the grants process including the development of the funding guidelines and decision making process.

All applications should demonstrate how they have developed their proposals in partnership with the target populations.

If they are successful in securing funding, the Commission should require all applicants to report on how they partner with consumers/community in the design, delivery, implementation and evaluation of their funded initiative.

Recommendation 4:

As an independent statutory authority, the Queensland Healthy Futures Commission Queensland independence will be uniquely placed to utilise a whole-of government and systems approach to the development of activities which will address the social determinants of health. As such, the Queensland Healthy Futures Commission Queensland should be required to **establish Cross-Government Advisory Groups (including consumers and representatives from key stakeholder groups)** to inform key campaigns and mechanisms.

Recommendation 5:

We note that the Commission will be funded through a mix of base funding, re-allocation of existing time-limited health promotion programs and projects, and election commitment funding. **There needs to be clarity around the link between the Commission, the CHO's office and Queensland Health's Prevention Division**, in terms of focus areas, expertise, collaboration and avoiding duplication.

Recommendation 6:

We note the scope has been focused on children and families. Whilst we welcome the impact that this will have on reducing the future burden of disease on Queenslanders, we recommend that the Commission's **initiatives identify and report on how they impact on improving the wellbeing of other population groups** eg. older people. Further, we hope that with proven success, over time the Commission could extend its focus to other population ages and group.

Conclusion

Health Consumers Queensland welcomes the creation of a Queensland Healthy Futures Commission Queensland. We look forward to supporting the Commission to be a vital driver for empowering communities to improve our own health outcomes.