

## **Submission to the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee, Queensland Parliament**

### ***Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019***

#### **The Institute for Urban Indigenous Health**

The Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH) was established in 2009 as a strategic response to the significant growth and geographic dispersal of Indigenous people within the SEQ region – where 38 per cent of the State's and 11 per cent of the nation's Indigenous population live. This region represents the largest and equal fastest growing Indigenous population in Australia, with current numbers of 93,000 (Markham and Biddle, 2017) projected to grow to 130,000 (Biddle, 2013).

As the backbone organisation of a regional network of member Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHSs) in SEQ, the IUIH was created by the existing four ACCHSs to drive the development and implementation of transformational change to the way health care services were delivered by urban Indigenous Australians in the region.

The IUIH four member organisations, comprising the founding ACCHSs which collaborated to establish the organisation in 2009, are:

- The Brisbane Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service Brisbane (ATSIHC Brisbane); headquartered in Woolloongabba with additional clinics in Browns Plains, Woodridge, Northgate, Marsden, Acacia Ridge and Loganlea.
- Yulu-Burri-Ba Aboriginal Corporation for Community Health (Yulu-Burri-Ba), headquartered on North Stradbroke Island, with additional mainland clinics in Capalaba and Wynnum;
- The Kalwun Development Corporation (Kalwun), headquartered in Miami with additional clinics in Oxenford and Bilinga; and
- The Kambu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Health (Kalwun), headquartered in Ipswich and additional clinics in Goodna, Laidley and Booval.

The IUIH separately established and directly manages the Moreton Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service (MATSICHS), with clinics in Caboolture, Morayfield, Deception Bay, Strathpine and Margate.

Collectively, the above five services and the IUIH are known as the IUIH Network.

### ***Deadly Choices: “A Deadly Choice is a Healthy Choice”***

*Deadly Choices* is the flagship preventative health initiative of the UIH.

*Deadly* meaning ‘good’ to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it is a strengths-based, culturally framed approach to empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to make healthy choices and to get an annual health check.

*Deadly Choices* offers a range of programs addressing healthy lifestyle promotion, tobacco education, cooking and nutrition for our young children to our Elders. Our *Deadly Choices* community and sporting events are smoke-free, alcohol-free, and sugar-free and bring our families together in a positive healthy environment.

*Deadly Choices* plays an important role in repositioning identity within health promotion, providing a counter-narrative to the deficit focus of mainstream health promotion (where the focus is often on addressing risky behaviours). The narrative is positive, inclusive and proud, and controlled by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

*Deadly Choices* is a nationally recognised brand across Australia and is supported by prominent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ambassadors and sports celebrities.

The *Deadly Choices* logo has become one of the most recognised health brands in the country and has emerged as one of the biggest success stories in Indigenous health communication and marketing. This has been driven by both the high profile celebrity endorsement and also by the highly incentivised merchandising strategy, providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-designed *Deadly Choices* shirts for undergoing a health check.

A number of highly promoted partnerships have been established with major sporting clubs such as the Brisbane Broncos, North Queensland Cowboys, Brisbane Lions, Gold Coast Titans, QLD Reds.

Social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, are part of our highly successful communication and engagement strategy. Our *Deadly Choices* Facebook page currently has nearly 60,000 followers, with a reach of close to 87,000. The average engagement is between 5-7%, which is 6 times the worldwide comparable industry average. This places UIH and *Deadly Choices* at the forefront of being able to influence, leverage and benefit from our engaged audiences. Significantly, a wide-reaching 2000 to 2800 people are seeing and engaging and/or connecting to every post made.

Since 2010/2011 when *Deadly Choices* first commenced, 115,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have participated in our programs and events. There have been 67,000 health checks referred through our *Deadly Choices* programs.

Our scorecard for 2017-2018 in SEQ alone indicates:

- Over 20k health checks conducted
- 10,634 new patients engaged
- 17 smoke, alcohol and sugar free events
- Nearly 4,000 participants
- 119 education programs delivered

From 1 July 2018, *Deadly Choices* was funded \$7.8m per year for 2 years by Queensland Health for the state-wide implementation.

The IUIH has partnered with eleven (11) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Services within 5 regions outside of our footprint in South East Queensland, including:

- Far North QLD: Wuchopperen Health Service, Mulungu Aboriginal Medical Centre (Mulungu), Mamu Health Service, Gurriny Yealamucka Health Service (Gurriny);
- North QLD: Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Health Service (TAIHS), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (ATSICHS) Mackay
- North West: Gidgee Healing
- Central QLD: Bidjerdii Community Health Service, Galangoor Duwalami Primary Health Care
- South West: Charleville and Western Areas Aboriginal Health Services (CWAATSICH), Cunnamulla Aboriginal Corporation for Health (CACH).

A new health workforce of 71 *Deadly Choices* Program Officers are currently employed across Queensland to deliver the full range of programs, sporting activities and events.

### **Health and Wellbeing QLD: Impact**

The transition of existing prevention funding and activities currently administered by Queensland Health to Health and Wellbeing QLD (HWQ), will directly impact on the current and future funding arrangements and therefore sustainability of *Deadly Choices* across Queensland.

The state-wide implement of *Deadly Choices* has established a significant workforce, comprising 96% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. A disruption or reduction of the current funding levels will negatively impact on the state-wide implementation and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders workforce that is employed across Queensland.

### **Comments against the Bill**

#### *Part 2: Health and Wellbeing Queensland*

The IUIH supports the establishment of HWQ and commend the objectives to:

- A) Reduce the burden of chronic diseases through targeting risk factors for those disease and;
- B) Reduce health inequity

These objectives align with the work of IUIH and the *Deadly Choices* programs. There is significant evidence-base to support the need for greater focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, particularly in urban areas given this is where the largest Indigenous burden of disease lies and the most significant population growth predicted to be.

IUIH strongly recommends that consideration be given to fully embedding in the new entity's charter a strong commitment to developing targeted health promotion/illness prevention strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Part 3: Board

The IUIH commends the identification of at least one of the board member as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person.

IUIH propose that this person is best sourced from the community sector.

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