



University of the
Sunshine Coast

26 November 2015

Research Director
Health and Ambulance Services Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

Dear Research Director,

Response: Inquiry into the establishment of a Queensland Health Promotion Commission

Thank-you for the opportunity to respond to the inquiry into the establishment of a Queensland Health Promotion Commission. The terms of reference (TOR) is to be commended and is a positive and significant step forward for health and wellbeing outcomes for populations in Queensland. In particular, the foundation of investigating a whole of government collaborative approach, addressing the upstream determinants of health and using and embedding evaluation and research into the process is supported by the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) as an informed and well-evidenced approach.

USC has a team of qualified and experienced health promotion staff who are further developing research in the field of public health and supporting the application of best practice in health promotion. We believe that the approach to the inquiry has significant merit. This response will highlight feedback and evidence for specific areas of the TOR.

1.b.ii Inquire into the effectiveness of models used in other jurisdictions (agencies or whole of government policy frameworks)

In investigating approaches for improving and sustaining health and wellbeing used elsewhere, it would be useful to define what 'effectiveness' means for the purposes of the inquiry, and clearly identify other measures used by other jurisdictions to assess effectiveness. USC recommends that measures of effectiveness extend beyond traditional health outcomes (such as hospitalisations) to include economic outcomes and impacts of other sectors achieved through health. In addition, USC recommends that clear indicators be used to identify good-practice models used in other jurisdictions. Such indicators should include the use and relevance of health promotion practice frameworks and models to demonstrate sound underpinning of good practice in health promotion

(i.e. Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion)¹. Engaging with the community is also a critical process for effective health promotion and how it is conducted and measured needs to be considered.

USC recommends that bipartisan support is sought for any whole of government approach established in Queensland. In addition to reviewing models used in other jurisdictions, there is a need to understand the existing systems and decision making processes in Queensland sectors that impact on health and wellbeing.

Auditing departmental policy at the highest levels to assess the impact of departmental roles on health and wellbeing of populations will be important in understanding how health and wellbeing is currently being impacted positively and negatively in Queensland. This will enable a better understanding of how systems unique to Queensland may be modified to ensure effective and sustainable health and wellbeing outcomes. For instance, embedding health impact assessment in policy across departments as a mandatory requirement for cabinet funded projects. Other smaller modifications to policy can also have a significant impact.

2.a Consider approaches to addressing the social determinants of health

The intent of this comment is correct and commended as a modern approach to address health and well-being in our population. To clarify and confirm, there are many determinants of health including environmental, economic, natural, social, spiritual, built and individual that all need consideration. All of these determinants are impacted by the social position of individuals and communities.

There are few government policies that consider these socially determined inequalities in health outcomes; and the approaches required to undertake this work is a much needed priority in Queensland². The World Health Organisation has endorsed the approach of 'Health in All Policies' as a systematic and sustainable way of integrating health and wellbeing into the policy process of all sectors of government, whether they are transport, housing or economic development³. South Australia, with their ongoing commitment to a cross sector plan, the South Australia Strategic Plan, utilises the Health in all Policies systems approach⁴. The policy review process across sectors is an example of where this can work in practice in Australia⁵.

2.e. Consider ways of partnering across government and with industry and community including collaborative funding, evaluation and research

Collaborative funding, evaluation and research requires a strong and consistent political support platform. Consideration of this type of cross-government partnership is well supported by USC. In particular, embedding evaluation as part of the role and strategic direction of the Queensland Health Promotion Commission would likely further enable more funding and research opportunities to form. Allowing sufficient resources for this evaluation to be done in a way that documents and encourages the practice of health promotion is required.

¹ World Health Organisation. The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion. Available from <http://www.who.int/healthpromotion/conferences/previous/ottawa/en/>

² World Health Organisation http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/sdh/08_en.html

³ World Health Organization. (2014). Health in all policies: Helsinki statement. Framework for country action. Available at http://www.who.int/healthpromotion/conferences/8gchp/statement_2013/en/

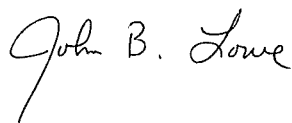
⁴ South Australia Government. SA Strategic Plan. Available at <http://saplan.org.au/>

⁵ Kickbusch, I., McCann, W., & Sherbon, T. (2008). Adelaide revisited: from healthy public policy to Health in All Policies. *Health promotion international*,23(1), 1-4.

Further to the comments above, it is hoped that the inquiry into a Queensland Health Promotion Commission will also give consideration for the capacity of resources (staff, funding, qualifications and expertise) required to achieve population health outcomes in Queensland. Previously health promotion has been underfunded and under-resourced. Qualified practitioners in health promotion, advanced level experts in specific fields (eg. health economics) and other areas of public health expertise (eg. epidemiology) are required for a comprehensive and effective approach to health and wellbeing outcomes for Queenslanders.

USC believe that there is potential for further collaborative work between all levels of government, non-government and other research institutions to progress work in health promotion in Queensland. As mentioned above, it will be important to review each sector's role in contributing to the health and wellbeing of communities and for sectors to work together to ensure positive health impacts for Queenslanders. USC welcome the opportunity for future involvement and collaboration in the establishment of a Queensland Health Promotion Commission.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John B. Lowe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a long, sweeping underline.

Professor John B Lowe
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