

Committee Secretary,
Health, Communities, Disability Services and
Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee,
Parliament House,
George Street,
Brisbane QLD 4000.



Sent by email health@parliament.qld.gov.au

06 January 2020

Dear Mr Hanson,

Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2019

Every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person in Queensland should have access to good healthcare. The disease burden for younger people is predominantly due to mental health and injury. Cardiovascular disease, cancer and respiratory disease predominantly burden our older peoples (aged 50+). Hospital and Health Services (HHSs) provide a vital function for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland.

We believe the Department of Health's recommended changes through the *Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2019* will strengthen the capability and effectiveness of HHSs. In particular, QAIHC supports:

- The change in nomenclature from 'Indigenous' to 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' (part 3, clause 6). QAIHC recommends that the Government use the term "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples" to reflect the multiple and distinct groups of peoples in Queensland.
- The explicit commitment and guiding principle to achieving health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to deliver responsive, capable and culturally competent health care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (part 3, clause 8)
- The mandatory requirement for each HHS board to have an identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Director position (part 3, clause 11)
- The addition of "skills, knowledge and experience in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and community issues relevant to the operation of the Service" as a recommended skill set to be represented on the board (part 3, clause 11)
- The requirement for each HHS to develop (through community consultation) and publish a Health Equity Strategy to achieve health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the provision of health services by the HHS (part 3, clause 13 and 14)

As the peak body for the 26 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Organisations in Queensland we fully support the changes proposed. We believe these changes will set in motion important steps to reduce institutional racism within the health system and improve access to tertiary health care in Queensland.

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of this letter, please contact Angela Young, General Manager Policy and Research [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

Neil Willmet

Chief Executive Officer

Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council