



3 June 2017

Ms Leanne Linard
Health, Communities, Disability Services and
Domestic and Family Violence Prevention
Committee Chair
Parliament House, George Street,
Brisbane QLD 4000

Dear Ms Linard

The establishment of the Healthy Futures Commission Queensland Bill 2017

The Australian Health Promotion Association Queensland Branch (the Association) commends the Committee on the establishment of the *Healthy Futures Commission Queensland* (the Commission) to support the adoption of healthy lifestyle behaviours among Queensland children and families.

The *Healthy Futures Commission Queensland Bill 2017* (the Bill) is a great achievement for the Queensland Government and the Association supports the Queensland Government's commitment to increasing and improving health promotion and preventing chronic disease for all Queenslanders. The Association requests the Committee consider the concerns noted below in relation to the provisions of the Commission. These concerns include achievable targets and performance measures, financial provisions and broadening of the functions of the Commission to include integrated, strategic and whole-of-government oversight.

The Association would like to raise concerns to the Committee regarding the specific purpose and targets for childhood obesity and physical activity. As best practice, research and the performance of other State and Territory Governments' strategies indicate, the Association has concerns that the Committee's target to reduce childhood obesity by ten (10) per cent and increase physical activity by 20 per cent among Queenslanders by 2026 is unrealistic with the current provisions outlined in the Bill, particularly regarding staffing and financial provisions. The Association urges the Committee to re-consider the targets and provisions within the Bill to ensure that the Commission is being established under predetermined success.

The New South Wales (NSW) Premier's priority is to reduce childhood overweight and obesity by five (5) per cent over ten years. The NSW Premier's priority is implemented

across the State with a substantial workforce and financial provision at both State and Local Health Districts levels. Additionally, the NSW Premier's priority is implemented via numerous statewide healthy children initiatives, including early childhood, primary school initiatives, community initiatives and targeted obesity initiatives. Hence, the Association strongly suggests the revision of the Commission's targets or the reinvestment into a health promotion workforce across Queensland with sufficient financial provisions to support the achievement of these targets as they currently stand.

Additionally, the financial provision includes 55% of the *Healthy Futures Queensland Fund* be allocated to the funding of grants. Whilst the Association acknowledges the importance of local level community initiatives through a grants program, the Association recommends the Committee review this in consideration of the target concerns, as outlined above. The Association suggests the Committee review cost-analysis of local level community initiatives evidence and the impact of grants programs on childhood obesity rates.

The Association urges the Committee to consider the complexity of the approach required to address a complex health issue such as childhood obesity. Some additional considerations include policy and legislation environment, health promotion initiatives across settings, communities and sectors, re-establishment of a health promotion workforce, community and workforce capacity building, and leadership that influence system-change and drive reform in relation to integration across multiple levels within the system and sectors.

The Association requests that the Committee review the functions outlined in the Bill to include the Commission have oversight of strategic leadership across whole-of-government and inter-sectorial collaboration, with consideration given to pre-established partnerships with industry, tertiary education sector, Commonwealth and local governments, Primary Health Networks, and community organisations. The re-establishment of statewide strategic leadership and an agency which coordinates the collaboration of whole-of-government initiatives will support the development, implementation and evaluation of innovative and sustainable approaches across agencies and sectors.

Further, statewide strategic leadership will ensure that the social determinants and inequities related to obesity are addressed efficiently through an inter-sectorial and inter-agency approach, with consideration to tailoring initiatives for vulnerable populations and geographical dissemination. Tailoring of initiatives can be supported by a grants program, however, oversight of a coordinated approach is required to ensure initiatives are not duplicated, gaps are addressed and financial efficacy of the Commission is achieved. Hence, the revision of the Commission's functions is required for the Queensland Government to effectively address childhood obesity and health inequalities in a cost-effective and timely manner.

The Association has concerns that as the Bill currently stands it is suggested that the targets will not be achieved within the timeframes, financial provision and restricted workforce provision in alignment with the current functions.

As the Committee is aware, the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders was greatly impacted by the Newman Government and abolishment of the public health workforce, the re-allocation of funds and resources, and cessation of statewide and community health promotion initiatives. The Association is interested to hear from the Committee in relation to how the Queensland Government will address these concerns and improve the health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders, such as the adoption of healthy lifestyle behaviours among

adolescents, adults and the elderly.

The Association would welcome the opportunity to discuss alternative options regarding strategies to achieve the Commission's purpose and functions, including the review of the financial provisions, to ensure that optimal health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders is improved, with a focus on children and families.

Once again, the Association commends the Committee on the establishment of the *Healthy Futures Commission Queensland* and the *Healthy Futures Queensland Fund*; however further review is required to ensure that the Queensland Government is successful.

Please contact Ms Anita Cowlshaw, the Queensland Branch President, if you wish to discuss feedback provided in relation to achievable targets and performance measures, financial provisions and broadening the function of the Commission.

Regards,



Anita Cowlshaw
Queensland Branch
President

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