

14 June 2017

Healthy Futures Commission Queensland Bill 2017

Submission No. 012

To whom it may concern,

RE: Proposed outcome measures for Healthy Futures Commission Queensland

We are a group of Queensland-based health and fitness professionals with an interest in assisting the aims of the Commission. We applaud the formation of the Healthy Futures Commission Queensland to 'support the capacity of children and families to adopt a healthy lifestyle' and 'contribute to reducing health inequity for children and families.' Every day in our work we see the power of the social determinants of health to influence the opportunities people have in participating in health promoting activities. It is indeed time to lead by innovation as a focus on weight loss as a proxy for health has regrettably resulted in little sustained benefit¹ and inequitable opportunities for health improvement in the populations at risk for lifestyle-related chronic disease.

We are making this submission because we have grave concerns about the prevalence of childhood obesity being used as the primary outcome measure of program success in this population, as stated in the press release and parliamentary documents. Positive changes to dietary patterns and physical activity are not automatically expressed in changes to weight, and BMI is not an accurate or adequate tool to assess lifestyle behaviours or health status in children or adults.

While body weight and growth patterns in children are certainly influenced by a multitude of factors including diet and physical activity, using BMI to assess the impact of the Commission is misguided. Note that the definition of overweight in childhood is a BMI between the 85th and 95th percentiles, and obesity is a BMI of greater than the 95th percentile on the CDC age adjusted growth charts². This means that 10% of children will be classed as overweight and 5% will be classed as obese as a completely normal part of their growth pattern. The published prevalence of Queensland childhood obesity is 7% and of overweight children is 19%³. With this fact in mind, it is clear the proposed efforts directed towards 26% of Queensland children will be unnecessary for almost 60% of them; that's 150 000 children in real figures. Unnecessarily interrupting the normal growth and development for these children may well confer harm and this risk should not be disregarded. Contrast this with the 300 000 children (30%) who do not eat sufficient fruit, 960 000 children (96.3%) who do not eat sufficient vegetables, and 550 000 children (55%) who are not sufficiently active for health and it becomes clear that an undue focus on larger kids is inequitable.

Parliamentary documents⁴ assert that 'the over-arching purpose of the commission is to support the capacity of children and families to adopt a healthy lifestyle through a focus on promoting physical activity and healthy eating'. It follows then that it is these factors that should be used as key outcome measures of change, not BMI. It is the exception rather than the rule that significant positive changes in these areas impacts upon BMI in children. Nourishing, health-supporting diets are not defined solely by their energy content. Children of all sizes can be sedentary and have poor diets, just as active well-nourished children come in all shapes too. Focussing efforts on and thus pathologising larger kids entrenches weight stigma⁵ which is itself a predictor of poorer health in adulthood and the development of disordered eating and eating disorders⁶ through adolescence and beyond.

We strongly encourage the commission to provide funding to projects that prioritise health related behaviour-based, quality of life, equity-impact-related outcomes or growth-velocity-based outcome measures rather than BMI. The Healthy Futures Commission Queensland could be a world leader in this space by incorporating weight-neutral policy into its objectives, activities and outcomes.

Our contact details are below and overleaf if you wish to discuss these factors further; we welcome consultation.

Sincerely,



Fiona Willer, Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD), *Health Not Diets*, [REDACTED] Boyne Island, 4680, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Submission development group:

Deb Blakley, Dietitian-Nutritionist APD, *Kids Dig Food*, deb@kidsdigfood.com.au

Natalie Thompson, APD, *Delectable Dietetics*, <https://delectabledietetics.wordpress.com>

¹ National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), 2013, Clinical practice guidelines for the management of overweight and obesity in adults, adolescents and children in Australia, p161 https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/n57_obesity_guidelines_140630.pdf

² Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne http://www.rch.org.au/childgrowth/Overweight_and_obesity/

³ Queensland Government, 2016 Chief Health Officer Report, p75 <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/research-reports/reports/public-health/cho-report/2016/full#8>

⁴ *Healthy Futures Queensland Commission Bill*, presented 23 May 2017 by Hon. CR. Dick, transcript: <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/tableOffice/BillMaterial/170523/Healthy.pdf>

⁵ Brewis A, 2014, *Stigma and the perpetuation of obesity*, Social Science and Medicine <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953614005206>

⁶ American Academy of Pediatrics, 2016, *Preventing Obesity and Eating Disorders in Adolescents* <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2016/08/18/peds.2016-1649>

Christina Turner, APD, *Sol Nutrition*, [REDACTED]

Hilary Smith, APD, [REDACTED]

Jessi Bruns, Dietitian, [REDACTED]

Kate Pollard, Accredited Practising Dietitian, *Centre For Integrative Health*, [REDACTED]

Nerida Deans, Dietitian, [REDACTED]

Jaslyn Dugmore, student dietitian at the University of Queensland, [REDACTED]

Dan Lewin, APD, [REDACTED]

Sean Cornish, APD, [REDACTED]

Gareth Salkield, APD, [REDACTED]

Gillian Larcombe, APD, [REDACTED]

Victoria Fengler, Dietetics student, [REDACTED]

Co-signed by:

Noell Burgess, APD, [REDACTED]

Leigh Bramwell, Nutritionist, [REDACTED]

Dr Kiera Buchanan, Clinical and Health Psychologist, *Centre For Integrative Health*, [REDACTED]

Marita Cooper, Psychologist, *Centre For Integrative Health* [REDACTED]

Alanah Dobinson, Exercise Physiologist, *Centre For Integrative Health* [REDACTED]

Glenn Mackintosh, Clinical Psychologist, *Weight Management Psychology*,

[REDACTED]

Jennifer Shirtcliff, APD, *Downs Dietetic Services Professional Nutrition Advice*, [REDACTED]

Claire Nelson, APD, *PhD Candidate QUT*, [REDACTED]

Stephanie Heard, Dietitian/Exercise Physiologist, [REDACTED]

Charlotte Bush, APD and Personal Trainer, [REDACTED]

Kerryn Buttenshaw, *Healthy Harmony*, [REDACTED]

Tiffany Bleakley, Clinical Dietitian, *Queensland Health (GCHHS)*, [REDACTED]

Rachelle Ballard-Clayton, Personal Trainer and Health Coach, *MEE Personal Training*,

[REDACTED]

Annalie Houston, APD, *Southern Qld Centre of Excellence in Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care*,

[REDACTED]

Courtney Anderson, APD, [REDACTED]

Melissa Goodwin, APD, [REDACTED]

Amanda Barnett, Clinical Educator Dietitian (APD), [REDACTED]

Skye Ryall, Dietitian, [REDACTED]

Rachael Bradford, APD, *Eat and Enjoy Nutrition*, [REDACTED]

Lauren McGuckin, APD and Credentialed Diabetes Educator, [REDACTED]

Philippa Bowman, Pre/Postnatal Fitness Expert, *Nurtured Fitness*, [REDACTED]

Alison Kempe, Dietitian, [REDACTED]

Imogen Randall, Dietitian, *Queensland Health, Cairns Hospital*, [REDACTED]

Wendy Stevens, Dietitian (APD & AN), [REDACTED]

Rachael Wilcox, Nutrition Student, [REDACTED]

Kristin Lawrence, Dietitian, [REDACTED]

Jenna Alderton, Personal Trainer, *Elite PT*, [REDACTED]

Mandy-Lee Noble, APD, [REDACTED]

Camey Demmitt, Dietitian, APD & RD, [REDACTED]

Jodie Sheraton, APD, [REDACTED]

Emma Robertson, APD, [REDACTED]

Rebecca Downes, APD, Paediatric Dietitian, [REDACTED]