



Submission to Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee

Hospital Foundations Bill 2017

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submission

Introduction

The Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union (QNMU) thanks the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee for the opportunity to provide a submission on the *Hospital Foundations Bill 2017* (the Bill).

Nursing and midwifery is the largest occupational group in Queensland Health and one of the largest across the Queensland government. The QNMU is the principal health union in Queensland covering all categories of workers that make up the nursing workforce including registered nurses (RN), registered midwives (RM), enrolled nurses (EN) and assistants in nursing (AIN) who are employed in the public, private and not-for-profit health sectors including aged care.

Our more than 56,000 members work across a variety of settings from single person operations to large health and non-health institutions, and in a full range of classifications from entry level trainees to senior management. The vast majority of nurses in Queensland are members of the QNMU.

General Comment

Our submission responds in general terms to the Bill. We support the main purpose of the Bill establishing a legislative framework under which entities may support and improve the public health system in Queensland.

The QNMU is concerned with the proposal to change the composition of the board. The Bill is proposing to remove specific membership requirements that would see employees of a hospital within the Hospital and Health Services (HHS) or an employee of a university or other educational institution, no longer required to be on the board. Employee representation on boards promotes better communication between all stakeholders and improves boardroom diversity by incorporating employee voices (Dyrenfurth, 2017). Effectively, the board may have no member appointed from a health background, particularly with nursing or midwifery experience. It is stated in the '*Hospital Foundations Bill 2017 Explanatory Notes*' that this process will improve flexibility, yet for the sake of improving flexibility it may just remove specialist expertise and health industry knowledge from the board.

Foundations undertake initiatives that support local health services. This support includes grants, research, staff professional development and the provision of facilities to support patients, staff and the community. With the potential of having a board whose membership has no member with health experience, in particular from the nursing or midwifery fields,

the QNMU asserts this may influence the board undertaking nursing and/or midwifery initiatives. It would be preferential to keep the specific membership requirements for foundations prescribed in the *Hospitals Foundations Act 1982*.

References

Dyrenfurth, N. (2017). Making Australia fair again: The case for employee representation on company boards. *John Curtin Research Centre Essay Series, 2*, 1-24.