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Sub# 1

28 May 2012

Mr Peter Dowling MP
Chair, Health and Community Services Committee
Queensland Parliamentary Service
Parliament House
Cnr George and Alice Streets
Brisbane QLD 4000



Dear Mr Dowling,

Thank you for the 24 May 2012 requesting comments by 29 May on the Health and Hospitals Network and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. General Practice Queensland (GPQ) welcomes this opportunity and provides the following comments for your consideration.

General observations:

GPQ notes that the proposed amendments provide for:

- 'Local Health and Hospital Networks' to be renamed as 'Hospital and Health Services';
- Hospital and Health Services to have more local control over land and buildings;
- 'Governing Councils' to be renamed as 'Hospital and Health Boards' (Clause 12 requires one or more members of a board to be clinicians);
- The establishment of an Executive Committee of each Board to work with the Hospital and Health Service chief executive on strategic issues; and
- The establishment of Ancillary Boards to provide advice to the Health and Hospital Services.

Specific comments:

There are several areas in the Health and Hospitals Network and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 where further detail and/or clarification would be important and useful.

Establishment of Executive Committees:

GPQ notes that it is proposed that the Executive Committees monitor engagement with Medicare Locals (as required under Section 42 of the *Health and Hospitals Network Act 2011*).

We also note that it is proposed that the Executive Committees will oversee clinical and community engagement strategies under the Act (this includes monitoring their implementation, and addressing issues that arise in their implementation).

From the proposed amendments, it is not clear what will be put in place to oversee and monitor these engagement strategies. For example, how will Executive Committees link up with the governance structures of both Medicare Locals and Hospital and Health Services? And how could Medicare Local advisory committees or reference groups (or equivalents) be included in this governance arrangement?

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The proposed amendments indicate that Membership of the Executive Committee will include clinical members of the Board – it is suggested that this will enhance the clinical involvement and clinical leadership with the Hospital and Health Services. It will be important to clarify the details of how this will happen, particularly given the recent Commonwealth Budget's changes to the arrangements for Lead Clinician Groups, and their links with Medicare Locals.

It is also not clear how these proposed new structures could link up with the National Health Reform Agreement's provisions (e.g., D36) regarding the Commonwealth and the States working together on system-wide policy and state-wide planning for general practice and primary health care.

Another area that is important (and seems to be lacking) is where does aged and community care fit?

Establishment of Ancillary Boards:

GPQ notes that the Act will be amended to enable the Minister to establish Ancillary Boards to provide advice to Hospital and Health Boards on the operations of specific hospitals or health services within their region.

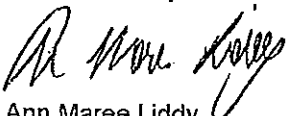
The proposed amendments indicate that these Ancillary Boards will be composed of members of the local community, and that Regulations may outline the way in which Ancillary Boards are to exercise their functions, consultation arrangements with Hospital & Health Boards, and Hospital & Health Services, and appointment processes.

From the information provided, it is not clear what the scope, purpose, authority, funding and accountability of the Ancillary Boards will be. Without this detail, it is not possible to assess how the Ancillary Boards will work with (and add value to) the Hospital and Health Services, Medicare Locals and the health outcomes for the communities for which they are responsible. This will be critical in an environment of devolved decision-making.

In our view, it is essential to clarify the links between (a) Health and Hospitals Network and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 (b) the clinician and community and consumer engagement strategies in the *Health and Hospitals Network Act 2011* (especially those relating to Medicare Locals) and (c) any requirements for the Ancillary Boards that may be prescribed under a Regulation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments. If you have any questions or you require further information, please contact me on (07) 3105 8300.

Yours sincerely



Ann Maree Liddy
Chief Executive Officer