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Dear Ms Pasley

Heart Foundation response to the Queen's Wharf Brisbane Bill 2015

The Heart Foundation welcomes the opportunity to provide comment to the Queen's Wharf Brisbane Bill 2015, having also provided comment to the Deputy Premier on the proposed Queen's Wharf Brisbane (QWB) Priority Development Area (PDA) Development Scheme before it was approved. As you will be aware from our feedback to the Planning Bills 2015 last month, the Heart Foundation has a strong interest in infrastructure and planning, because of their ability to impact on the health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders.

The Heart Foundation calls for an amendment in the Queen's Wharf Brisbane Bill 2015 to reflect the link between the precinct and health and wellbeing and to provide the necessary legislative framework to ensure that health and well-being considerations can be successfully and systematically incorporated into Queen's Wharf Brisbane.

We acknowledge the intended objectives of the QWB project as outlined in the Bill Explanatory notes and are particularly interested in the objects that are to:

- redefine public access and transport connections into, through and around the Brisbane city centre;
- deliver an internationally recognised precinct with world-class sustainable urban design and architecture that establishes a clear identity that is uniquely 'Brisbane' and 'Queensland';
- promote social interaction and a broad range of urban activities from the city centre down to the river's edge; and
- transform and activate places and spaces that draw people to Brisbane.

The Heart Foundation's updated recommendations for the QWB linked to the above objectives are to:

1. Include health and well-being as key considerations across all elements of the Bill;
2. Deem the QWB Precinct smoke-free for the enjoyment of all users – residents, employees, local visitors and tourists;
3. Make walking and active travel easy and safe choices through connected infrastructure planning, for the thousands of residents, employees, local visitors and tourists expected to use the Precinct; and
4. Formalise access to healthy local food choices.

1. Health and well-being as key considerations for the Queen's Wharf Precinct

After reviewing the approved PDA, it is positive to see recreation and an expansive public realm as key elements in the vision for the Precinct. However, although the [QWB PDA submission report](#) page 92 clearly acknowledges that health and well-being is an important consideration, it fails to recognise that this extends beyond active transport.

Health and well-being must be an integral consideration in all planning projects in order to counter the mega trends of increasing levels of unhealthy food choices, physical inactivity and obesity in our population and the resultant increased disability, hospitalisations and costs to our community through direct health care costs, loss of productivity and premature death.

The number of overweight or obese adults has increased by an average of 55,000 each year in Queensland since 1993¹, in part due to poor land use and transport planning.

Well-planned neighbourhoods in which we live, work, shop, play, learn and pray can provide access to a healthy food supply and increase the number of people who use active transport to local destinations such as shops, education facilities, parks, services, facilities and public transport².

International expert in public health, planning and transportation, [Mark Fenton](#) recommends that the design and layout of destinations must reward rather than punish people for arriving without a car³. We also need essential features that make our environments more inviting and safer to walk, ride or step off the bus; such as buildings up next to the footpath, with parking on-street or behind the building rather than a car park between the street and the building.

Planning and transport policy tend to overlook health as a significant outcome and yet these decisions significantly impact the health and well-being of our communities over the short, medium and longer term. The impact of less active travel is generally not considered as a health problem by planners⁴ and yet the impact on our society is clear with sedentary lifestyles and the consequent obesity epidemic. This impacts negatively on many chronic diseases including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer and mental health.

In our Planning Bills 2015 submission, the Heart Foundation recommended Queensland embed the promotion of health and well-being of Queenslanders into the Planning legislation, as has been done in NSW and Tasmania. If legislation is translated into actual statutory standards, implementation can be guaranteed and has a real benefit to the health and well-being of the population.

QWB could be a prime example of promoting the health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders and visitors to Queensland by ensuring a pleasant, efficient and safe environment for working, living and recreation.

Car dependent and sedentary behaviours are significant contributing factors to the prevalence of preventable chronic disease. The Heart Foundation is pleased to see a strong focus on higher density and mixed use in what is seemingly a walkable and connected Precinct.

However, reference to 'increased vehicle movement' within the proposed plan seems counterproductive and contradictory to other parts of the Scheme. If this vehicle movement is deemed necessary, we suggest speed limits are restricted to 30kph or significantly less if this movement is required in a public shared zone with significant pedestrian or cyclist volumes.

The Heart Foundation strongly recommends the following planning triggers and considerations for the QWB PDA to be seamlessly integrated. We are disappointed that the response in the [QWB PDA submission report](#) (page 93) deemed that these matters have been covered adequately in the scheme.

The Heart Foundation urges that more can be done in the QWB PDA to strengthen:

- **Local access** - to increase residential density, intensity of land-use and active transport networks to support local businesses, employment, education, cultural and recreational opportunities and frequent accessible, affordable public transport, including CityCycle.
- **Co-location** - to encourage groupings of key destination points within close proximity of each other to improve accessibility, integrated facilities and multiple uses of space and travel networks.
- **Traffic management** - to manage vehicle traffic to provide safe environments for people who are walking, cycling or catching public transport (e.g. reduced speed limits).
- **Welcoming paths** - to provide an accessible, attractive and welcoming street environment, with well maintained footpaths for all users.
- **Connected streets and linked communities** - to create connected street networks that allow pedestrians or cyclist to take more direct routes to and from destinations.
- **Functional public open space** - to design aesthetic, multipurpose public open spaces that are functional and accessible and cater for the needs of children, adolescents, adults and seniors of all abilities. Street trees, benches, water fountains, pedestrian lighting and bicycle racks, once considered “amenities,” are now recognised as functional and important for users of all ages and abilities.
- **Community safety** - to create communities where people feel safe in their residences, in the local streets and public spaces and that discourage criminal activity.
- **Food access** - to ensure urban design and the built environment do not inhibit but rather encourage healthy eating.
- **Building and design location** - buildings and facilities should provide opportunities for physical activity by ensuring the design, layout and location enhance amenity and provide an accessible environment for all. This includes accessible staircases of innovative, integrated design.

2. Establish the Queen’s Wharf Brisbane Precinct as smoke-free

The Heart Foundation recommends that the QWB Precinct be designated as smoke-free for the enjoyment of all users – residents, employees, local visitors and tourists. This can be achieved at any government outdoor precinct prescribed in regulation; as proposed under the *Tobacco and Other Smoking Products (Smoke-free Places) Amendment Bill 2015*, currently under consideration by a Parliamentary Inquiry by the Health and Ambulance Services Committee.

A smoke-free QWB Precinct will see Queensland leading the way in Australia and internationally.

Smoke-free public places are popular in Queensland and have been for many years with 87% of respondents to public consultation indicating that further outdoor smoking reforms were required⁵. Prescribing government outdoor precincts as smoke-free is similar to making pedestrian malls smoke-free which was also supported by 78% of respondents.

The Heart Foundation also recommends an amendment to the *Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998* to remove the anomaly that people can still smoke *indoors* in high roller rooms. The current exemption means that staff and patrons in premium gaming rooms continue to be exposed indoors to second hand smoke. We know that removing this exemption is popular with 81% of Queenslanders supporting this reform⁵. To date, no action has been taken on this.

Passive smoking is dangerous and kills people. It is estimated that 10% of the 3,700 Queenslanders who die every year from smoking¹, are the result of passive smoking⁶. People should not be exposed to cigarette smoke while going about their daily tasks of earning a living or attending a venue for entertainment.

3. Walking and active travel

The Heart Foundation strongly promotes the evidence that increasing participation in active travel not only improves population health (especially physical activity), it also has the potential to demonstrate cross sector benefits by relieving traffic congestion, reducing pollution and carbon emissions, improving road and pedestrian safety and upgrading urban amenities.

It is important that this Development makes walking and active travel easy and safe choices through connected infrastructure planning for the thousands of residents, employees and tourists expected to use the Precinct.

Physical inactivity is a major health problem in its own right, independent of whether someone is a healthy weight, overweight or obese. Disturbingly, 40% of Queensland adults are not sufficiently physically active to gain health benefits. Physical inactivity:

- costs the health budget an estimated \$1.5bn a year¹;
- causes 16,000 premature deaths a year⁷;
- increases the risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, colon and breast cancer; and
- is a critical factor in Queensland's obesity epidemic, with 2 in 3 Queensland adults measured as being overweight or obese¹.

Active travel (walking, cycling and public transport) builds physical activity into everyday lives. Active travel can be stimulated by creating and retrofitting urban areas through⁸:

- planning and designing healthy, active communities;
- investing in active travel infrastructure including safe connected street networks;
- connecting local destinations and public transport facilities;
- footpaths with seating, lighting and shade;
- cycle paths and lanes; and
- through better prioritisation and integration of these strategies.

[Bicycle Queensland](#) and Transport and Main Roads experts have explored the Strava heat maps for Brisbane for both [running](#) and [cycling](#) which show that QWB is a significant hotspot. These data support that connectivity and way finding need to be maintained both during construction and once the development is completed. Bicycle Queensland is the leading organisation for promoting safe, everyday bicycle riding and advising government engineers on suitable designs for cycling facilities.

It is encouraging that the Precinct vision is to have an enhanced movement network and the Heart Foundation supports the use of the AusRoads road design guide⁹, together with the three Queensland specific Technical Notes, [TN130](#), [TN131](#) and [TN133](#), which will form

Queensland-specific supplements to the AusRoads Guides and provide guidance on the speed, termination treatments and width of shared paths.

Public transport is also important to active lifestyles. People who use public transport spend significantly more time walking than those who drive cars to work. One Melbourne study found those who used public transport on average spent 41 minutes walking and/or cycling as part of their journey compared with an average of just 8 minutes for those who used private transport¹⁰.

The Heart Foundation supports the need to build a 'cross river rail' solution as soon as possible. It will be important that the QWB Precinct is able to accommodate the thousands of passengers disembarking from any future stations. We have been involved in the stakeholder groups on the cross river solution over the last five years and know there will be the need for dispersion strategies and infrastructure to accommodate the increased pedestrian flow.

The inclusion of the proposed seven key mid-block pedestrian connections and shared zones within the precinct will be vital for this increased flow, as will the extensive public realm and key locations highlighted throughout the proposed development.

We commend Economic Development Queensland for making pedestrian permeability a high priority including safety, minimising driveways, the inclusion of scatter crossings, easy navigation, lighting and active spaces.

In comparison with other transport projects, investments in walking have been shown to be excellent value for money. An extensive international review of evaluations of walking environments in 2011 by the University of the West of England showed positive cost benefit ratios of up to 37.6.¹¹ The highest value for money transport projects were smarter choices, cycle and pedestrian schemes, local safety schemes and some bus schemes. This suggests investment in the walking environment is likely to be at least, if not better, value for money than other transport projects.

Cities around the world are embracing changes to favour active transport. These changes result in economically competitive and more liveable environments. Our looming crisis in (physical inactivity-related) chronic disease is being compounded by a massive demographic shift to an ageing population. Building healthy communities that are inclusive and encourage healthy ageing must be a primary concern for any government project that is serious about laying a sensible framework for the future of Queensland.

4. Food access in urban areas

The design and layout of our cities and towns can have a major effect on which foods people can readily access and consume². We currently have too many obesogenic communities where access to healthy foods is more difficult due to a limited range of healthy and affordable food options from food wholesalers, food retailers and foodservice outlets.

Considering that there are around 50 food and beverage outlets proposed for the QWB Precinct, planning needs to consider access to healthy food so people can easily access and afford to buy healthy food. Too many precincts are planned in a way where the easy, affordable access is to foods high in unhealthy saturated and trans fats, salt and sugar in urban areas, contributing significantly to overweight and obesity rates leading to heart disease, diabetes and other chronic disease⁸.

The [QWB PDA submission report](#) (page 92), states the issue of food access may be further investigated by other government departments or specific projects, which is unfortunately not definitive enough.

Some planning solutions to address these population health issues would include:

- reducing density and exposure of food outlets selling unhealthy foods;
- ensuring the presence of local grocery stores or fresh food markets/carts, as they are associated with higher fruit and vegetable consumption;
- providing public baby-care rooms and breastfeeding facilities; and
- ensuring water fountains in public spaces⁸.

In summary, the Heart Foundation has identified some promising elements in the QWB Redevelopment. However, we urge all Government agencies to continue to collaborate with leading organisations so planning and approval mechanisms enhance active, healthy environments.

We must not diminish health and well-being in any way in the pursuit of efficiencies to streamline processes or produce extravagant commercial infrastructure. The QWB Precinct should be a space for everyone to enjoy and benefit from and not be limited to particular socioeconomic groups.

Yours sincerely



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References

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