




Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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HEALTH AND WELLBEING QUEENSLAND BILL

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (5.10 pm): I too rise to address the Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill. This bill will establish a health promotion agency which, as the title suggests, will be known as Health and Wellbeing Queensland. As other speakers before me have pointed out, it is no surprise that our health system is struggling not only because it is being overseen by a Labor government but because of high rates of obesity; increasing chronic disease; disparity in life expectancy and chronic disease burdens within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; adverse effects of socio-economic factors; and a very quickly growing and, indeed, ageing population.

Like the speaker before me, I too have had loved ones pass earlier than they should have because of decisions they have made—decisions that they could have made otherwise and their deaths prevented. Both a grandfather and a grandmother were chronic smokers. One died of throat cancer and the other of lung related diseases. I also had a cousin commit suicide at an incredibly young age, so I want to pick up on the point made by the member for Southern Downs—that it will be very important for Health and Wellbeing Queensland to pick up mental health as well. We all would agree that the promotion of healthy choices and the promotion of personal wellbeing is critical. I am willing to admit that I fall into one of those categories myself.

Mr Minnikin: You're a smoker?

Mr POWELL: I am not a smoker. I take that interjection from the member for Chatsworth. My weight is something that I struggle with on a daily basis. It is why every morning at 5.15 when I am down here I get up with my good colleagues the member for Burnett, the member Gympie and the member for Burleigh and we tackle a six- to eight-kilometre walk. It is why I try to get to the gym as frequently as possible. Yes, I toddle along and listen to health awareness programs including the one we had this week from the Heart Foundation and the Stroke Foundation. It might surprise many in this chamber that my health belies my weight, so much so that one trainer—and I will not use the exact phrase—once referred to me as the 'fit fat bloke'.

We all need to be doing more. It is my hope that this organisation will do a lot more to ensure that preventive chronic disease is addressed before it becomes chronic here in Queensland. I do share the concerns of others on this side of the House. I question whether a statutory agency and the costs involved in establishing one is required. I want to make sure that as much of the investment as possible gets out to the grassroots organisations that are at the front line in combating preventive chronic disease—that all of the investment goes towards ensuring that Queenslanders, regardless of their socio-economic status, regardless of their gender, regardless of where they are located in the state, are able to access those kinds of health and wellbeing services.

I want to spend a bit of time like others did, including the Minister for Sport, acknowledging the role that sport can play in ensuring that you maintain a healthy lifestyle. The electorate of Glass House, like many others, is blessed with an extraordinary range of sporting organisations. If you want to play

Rugby League, there are clubs like the Stanley River Wolves and the Beerwah Bulldogs. If you want to play Rugby Union, there are clubs like the Maleny Bushrangers. We have soccer and cricket clubs at Maleny, Glass House Mountains, Wamuran and Palmwoods.

Tennis is literally everywhere in the electorate of Glass House. We even have croquet. We have netball clubs like Tibro's at Glass House Mountains, the Warriors at Woodford and one at Maleny. We have Little As at Maleny, Glass House Mountains and Wamuran. We have junior AFL at Elimbah, Palmwoods and Landsborough. All of those sporting organisations are there to engage our youngest people in ensuring that they have a healthy lifestyle and trying to embed within them the practices that will hopefully extend into their adulthood as well.

On that note, I want to point out that there is a significant need for investment in female facilities at these sporting organisations. My kids' local soccer club, which they have been involved in now for over 10 years, is no exception. The Palmwoods Warriors Football Club desperately needs female facilities. They have done a great job in attracting young girls to play soccer and to do so across the Sunshine Coast, but the lack of female-specific change rooms is creating a huge burden and we are seeing girls get to an age where they are walking away. That is replicated across the electorate of Glass House. It would be great to see the grant programs that were first initiated by the LNP such as Get in the Game and Get Playing expanded and focused on female facilities so that we can continue to provide those services.

I spoke to the member for Bundamba earlier today and acknowledged that I will need my passport stamped as I head into her electorate tomorrow afternoon to watch two of my children participate in the Queensland Christian Soccer Association state titles. My eldest boy, Dan, who just turned 18, will be representing the Sunshine Coast in the under-18s.

Mr McArdle: Are you the coach?

Mr POWELL: My middle daughter, Brielle, who will be turning 14 on Sunday, will be in the under-16 girls' team for the Sunshine Coast, which is actually coached not by me, member for Caloundra, but my wife, Taryn. It is a real family affair over the course of the long weekend at Redbank Plains. It will be great to see kids from around South-East Queensland participating in a sport they love, getting healthy and fit, and making wise decisions.

We need to be doing more. We need to be doing more as a parliament. The Labor government certainly needs to be doing more in terms of encouraging healthy activities and healthy choices. I do support the notion of Health and Wellbeing Queensland, but I again go back to what I said earlier. It must ensure that it does not become another bureaucracy. It must ensure that it does not exist for the sake of existing. It must deliver grants. It must deliver funding to those grassroots organisations that will ultimately deliver the education programs and the change programs that are required to change behaviours in people like me and others here in parliament who have acknowledged that they, too, fall into some of those risk categories. I commend the bill to the House.