




Speech By
Bruce Saunders

MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH

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HEALTH AND WELLBEING QUEENSLAND BILL

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (11.43 am): I rise to speak to the Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019. I first want to thank the minister and the department for the wonderful support that the committee received from them and thank the stakeholders involved because it was very interesting. I am very glad that the education committee inquired into this bill because this is something that I have been very interested in for many years. While I am on my feet, I want to congratulate the proactive approach that the Palaszczuk government is taking in terms of the advertising of junk food at railway stations and on government buildings. It is time that we took a stand on this because we know from the report of this committee the adverse effects this is having on health. We also hear about the fact that the Health bill is escalating over time, so this is a proactive step to ensure that the Health bill does not escalate in years to come. The explanatory notes state—

The objective of the Bill is to establish a health promotion agency, to be known as Health and Wellbeing Queensland (HWQ), as a statutory body. HWQ will contribute to:

- improving the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders;
- reducing the risk factors associated with chronic disease; and
- reducing health inequities.

As we know, we have to reduce the high rates of obesity. We have to be proactive, and that is what this government is all about with this bill. It is about being proactive. We all know that we will not be able to change eating habits overnight. It is going to take time to get people used to eating the right foods, but we need to have a government agency to help people do this. The Palaszczuk government that I am a part of is being proactive in this field unlike the Newman government, which cut agencies like this in the slash-and-burn years that it was in power. We hope that we are all on the same page now in realising that we have to be proactive. We have to educate people, and that came out loud and clear in the hearings held with stakeholders. All sides of the House have to work together to be proactive to ensure that people have access to information and are educated about good food, good nourishment and exercise. Many people today are not educated in terms of the right eating habits, ensuring that they are getting the right amount of exercise or the sugar or salt content in foods. As a government we have to ensure that people are aware of this, and this bill goes in the right direction.

I congratulate Queensland Health for this. We hear a lot of negative stories and bad things about Queensland Health from those opposite, but all I ever hear in my patch are good stories about the WBHHS. This is a step in the right direction. This has to be one of the best policies to come out of Health for a long time to ensure that people are heading in the right direction and eating the right foods. Some of the stakeholders mentioned putting programs such as these into schools to ensure that the younger generation know the healthy benefits of this lifestyle.

I made a comment during a committee hearing—and it was picked up by the *Brisbane Times*—that you could buy 100 party pies for \$20. In my electorate I was attacked for saying that by some of my opponents, but I was correct in saying that you could buy 100 party pies for \$20 in low socio-economic areas. Some of the worries that people come to see me about is the high cost of food, cutbacks in wages and the cost of living going out of control and people were buying party pies for dinner. Instead of feeding wholesome food to their children every night, they were buying party pies which were satisfying the hunger of the children. That really concerned me.

As a member of the government, this bill is heading in the right direction. I congratulate the minister, I congratulate Queensland Health and I congratulate all of the stakeholders involved. I commend the bill to the House.