




Speech By
Cynthia Lui

MEMBER FOR COOK

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HEALTH AND WELLBEING QUEENSLAND BILL

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (5.04 pm): I rise today in support of the Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019. The bill also amends the Hospital Foundations Act 2018 to enable the establishment of a foundation to support Health and Wellbeing Queensland in achieving its objectives. In doing so I would like to acknowledge the Palaszczuk government's strong commitment to the people of Queensland. This bill delivers on the Palaszczuk government's election commitment to establish a health promotion agency to be known as Health and Wellbeing Queensland to contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders and reducing the risk factors associated with chronic disease and health inequity.

The health of Queenslanders 2018: report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland identified that the health system continues to face public challenges including: high rates of obesity, increasing chronic disease burden, disparity in the life expectancy chronic disease burden for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and the adverse effect of socio-economic factors. I acknowledge the Minister for Health, the Hon. Steven Miles; the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee; the committee secretariat; the committee chair, Leanne Linard; and committee members for their hard work in the examination of the bill.

As someone raised in a remote community on the Torres Strait, I have lived and worked for many years in health in a remote community setting. I have both personal and professional experience of the challenges of dealing with and addressing chronic health issues in remote communities. As a health worker, I worked hard to achieve positive health outcomes for my community; namely, the planning and delivery of health programs to target specific groups in child health, women's and men's health, sexual health, chronic disease and diabetes. There was the maintaining of health registers to ensure patient health checks were kept up to date and patients were called for regular reviews to avoid falling between the gaps.

Unfortunately I experienced the passing of many loved ones in my community. In my maiden speech I shared my experience with each passing as I felt like I had failed. I was passionate about making a difference in health in my community—and I still am today—not just for the benefit of my community but for the benefit of every person and community in the electorate of Cook. I firmly believe in the power to use health promotion as a vehicle to prevent chronic diseases and mortality rates for all people.

I worked hard to educate and to raise awareness for better health outcomes in my community, but I did not quite understand nor appreciate the much larger issues. Health is not an isolated issue. Being a health worker then with a strong passion to make a difference, I could not solve the larger issues of employment, housing, education or the high cost of living. I held the responsibility of my community on my shoulders, but I always felt everything was beyond me.

The World Health Organization through the Ottawa Charter identified that the health sector alone cannot ensure prerequisites and prospects for health. It is recognised that health promotion requires coordinated action by governments, health and other social and economic sectors, non-government and voluntary organisations, local authorities, industry and the media. I firmly believe that the establishment of an independent agency to work with people in communities is a game changer for health outcomes in Queensland.

The establishment of Health and Wellbeing Queensland will provide an exciting opportunity to provide long-term strategic leadership and direction on whole-of-government initiatives and partnerships to address the social determinants of health; to act as an independent champion; to engage with the diverse sectors engaged in health promotion; to add to the empirical base underlying health promotion policy in Queensland; and to foster the innovative thinking required to reduce health inequity.

This government understands the factors that, combined with a growing and ageing population, are negatively impacting the quality of life for Queenslanders, the capacity of the health system and the productivity of the Queensland economy. I think almost all of us in this House could say that we could all work a little harder to make healthier choices. We need to lead the way and help support our fellow Queenslanders. I stand here proud to represent a government investing in preventive health. I commend the bill to the House.