





Speech By
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MEMBER FOR REDLANDS

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HEALTH AND WELLBEING QUEENSLAND BILL

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (12.57 pm): I rise in this House today to make a brief contribution to the Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019. This is just another example of our Palaszczuk government delivering for a brighter and healthier future for all Queenslanders. During the 2017 state election, our government committed to establishing a statutory health promotion commission to tackle Queensland's obesity and chronic disease rates. 'Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities' reinforces the Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019. We all know that we can do better in the health and wellbeing stakes. As the member for Nicklin pointed out, the temptation in this role can be great, with the many fantastic morning teas we attend. We just experienced one with the Cancer Council this morning, and a shout out to them for the great work they are doing.

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (3.59 pm), continuing: We all know that we can do better in the health and wellbeing stakes. The *Courier-Mail* reported last month on findings from a recent study presented by *The Lancet* medical journal that says that nearly one in six deaths in Australia can be attributed to poor diet. As the member for Nicklin noted in his contribution, there is temptation for us here with morning teas and cakes always on the offering. I gave a shout-out to the Cancer Council this morning. Their Biggest Morning Tea is coming up. I hope that every member is able to get involved in their community.

Cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and cancers caused by unhealthy eating killed more than 24,000 Australians in 2017. That is a death toll higher than deaths caused by smoking and traffic accidents combined. It is estimated that 70 per cent of Australians are overweight or obese. A significant proportion of Queensland Health's budget is being spent on what can only be described as a huge obesity problem in our country. Like the member for Mount Ommaney said, there are so many contributing and causal factors. My weight has always been a challenge for me—from my teenage years right up until today. It is a battle that many Australians and Queenslanders face. Our nation's battle with obesity accounts for a substantial proportion of preventable hospitalisations. In 2015 it was reported to have cost the Queensland economy an estimated \$12 billion.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to improving health. This bill focuses on those challenges facing Queenslanders that require complex, integrated and innovative solutions. As part of our objective to make Queensland the leading healthy state, the Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities report contains a target to increase the proportion of Queenslanders with a healthy body weight by 10 per cent by 2026. Consistent with the direction of that report, and to meet our government's commitment to a healthier Queensland, the bill will establish Health and Wellbeing Queensland as a statutory body that is focused on improving the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders. Investing in prevention is better than trying to find a cure. HWQ will be empowered to act as a champion for change will be well placed to coordinate efforts across diverse sectors and foster

the innovative thinking required to support the individual, community and environmental changes needed to reduce health inequities. We really need to see a significant cultural change in Australia. HWQ will help to strengthen linkages across sectors involved in illness prevention and health promotion, promote better alignment between federal, state and local jurisdictions, and increase shared responsibility across sectors.

I think it is very fair to say that we want to see an alignment between federal, state and local governments in how we work together to deliver for our communities. I know that the voters out there are thinking about that very thing. It has been spoken about a lot. We need to work better together. We have not seen that to date with this LNP government, particularly in the space around communities. When you look at their budget surplus of \$1.6 billion, you can see how ripped off people in the disability sector have been.

We also had the Heart Foundation in the parliament this week, and that was fantastic. They were promoting healthy heart checks. I encourage everyone in my community to check in with their GP to take the healthy heart test.

HWQ will facilitate the growing expectation for a new public health movement that focuses on building the capacity of people and communities to be a key force for social change in matters of health and wellbeing. It is all about prevention. Preventing and reducing the risk factors associated with chronic disease requires more than a single intervention. The impacts of poor health continue to be addressed by the health system, but many of the underlying determinates of health sit outside that system. It requires cultural change to bring about population-wide sustainable improvements in health and wellbeing. It requires a new approach—a multi-pronged strategy delivered in partnership with sectors not traditionally associated with health care and health services.

Investing in prevention has huge benefits for individuals, the community, the health system and our economy. That is what Health and Wellness Queensland will deliver. HWQ will provide a new way of working by investing in innovative projects generated by local community partnerships to create environments that support the health and wellbeing of Queensland communities. HWQ will play a part in working and partnering to reduce the burden of chronic disease in our communities. The bill provides that the functions of HWQ are to: facilitate and commission activities to prevent illness or promote health and wellbeing; and develop partnerships and collaborate across government and with entities such as businesses, industry organisations, community organisations, academia and local governments. It is about how we all come together as a community to solve this really big problem. HWQ will also look at how they provide grants to communities. We have myriad organisations in the Redlands that will be able to access this money to make my communities healthier and happier. HWQ will develop policies and advise the minister and government entities about illness prevention and promotion. It will go on science and facts, and I think that is really important. Most importantly, it will coordinate the exchange of information about activities to prevent illness and promote health and wellbeing.

HWQ's performance of these functions will contribute to the social change needed for Queenslanders to reduce their risk factors for chronic disease, reduce health inequity and improve overall health and wellbeing. This is a real step change for a better approach to healthier, happier Queenslanders through prevention rather than a cure. I commend this bill to the House.