




Speech By
Michael Healy

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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HEALTH AND WELLBEING QUEENSLAND BILL

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (11.58 am): I stand to speak in support of the Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019. This bill delivers on the Palaszczuk government's election commitment. Some in this chamber will benefit from this bill directly, but I find it absolutely remarkable that they would stand in here and dribble about the small politics associated with it. This bill is absolutely essential. It was requested in our communities. I can tell members that in my region, where there is a significant challenge with the breaking down of the traditional family unit, what people eat and their ability to maintain their health and that of their young children, this is essential legislation. To hear the negativity of certain members is nothing more than disturbing. I am also quite concerned that people in the real world find it disturbing that politicians carry on about this. I could not agree more.

The Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill was introduced to the Legislative Assembly and referred to the committee on 28 February. The committee received written advice from Queensland Health in response to issues raised in submissions and from the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services in relation to issues of fundamental legislative principles. The objective of the bill is to establish a health promotion agency. This is not building new bureaucracy; this is within the existing infrastructure. Any comments relating to the fact that we are building more bureaucracy are far from the truth.

The objective of the bill is to establish a health promotion agency, to be known as Health and Wellbeing Queensland, as a statutory body. The explanatory notes state that Health and Wellbeing Queensland will contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders; reducing the risk factors associated with chronic disease; and reducing health inequalities. I cannot register strongly enough how important this is, particularly in regional areas. This is what people need. When I am at schools talking to parents we are talking about sugar content in foods and drinks and education to ensure that our children and our next generation of Queenslanders are eating well.

The government consulted with key experts and opinion leaders on how to improve the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders and to identify opportunities for cross-sectorial collaboration and the role a health promotion agency could play to facilitate health prevention and health promotion. Ongoing consultation with key stakeholders will obviously continue during the establishment of this organisation.

As early as 1986, the World Health Organization, through the Ottawa Charter, identified that the health sector alone cannot ensure the prerequisites and prospects for health. It 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. It is very clear that this is a broad challenge across the entire community. I recognise that there is a lot of work to be done. Not all of us are married to a doctor, but we do have the skills to recognise the importance of eating well. People need to acquire knowledge, skills and information to make healthy choices, for example, about the food they eat. In that regard I do not need to consult my partner.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the chair, the member for Nudgee, the committee secretariat and my fellow colleagues on the committee. I am proud to be associated with this important, sensible, life-changing legislation. I commend it to the House.