




Speech By  
**Shane Knuth**

**MEMBER FOR HILL**

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### **HEALTH AND WELLBEING QUEENSLAND BILL**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (12.15 pm): I rise to voice my support for the Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill. The bill will establish a health promotional agency, to be known as Health and Wellbeing Queensland. It will be a statutory body tasked with improving the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders, reducing the risk factors associated with chronic disease and reducing health inequities. The proposed functions of HWQ are various. I believe the most important functions are to commission activities to prevent illness and promote health and wellbeing, and give grants to carry out those activities and reach their objectives.

Another vitally important initiative of HWQ will be to develop partnerships and collaborate with state and local governments, businesses, industry and community organisations, academics and individuals. This will provide a holistic and structured pathway to coordinate all activities under the umbrella of HWQ, instead of having a situation where the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing. I firmly believe that this bill offers a great opportunity to place Queensland at the forefront of preventive health and to educate and better the health of all Queenslanders.

This week I met with Diabetes Queensland. They outlined the fantastic work that they are doing to educate Queenslanders of the dangers of diabetes and to encourage testing and prevention treatments. Currently, Diabetes Queensland is annually funded, which gives no assurance for them to be able to plan long-term programs to tackle diabetes and relevant illnesses. However, under the Health and Wellbeing framework, a coordinated and funded organisation will be able to incorporate the work of Diabetes Queensland with an overall health plan for the state. The burden on Queensland Health is the result of a range of health and non-health risk factors. Allowing agencies, statutory and independent bodies to cross portfolio boundaries will ensure that inputs and risk factors can be acknowledged and tackled.

In my electorate alone, five per cent of the population or over 2,200 people are living with diabetes. Across the state, 4.7 per cent of people are living with diabetes. Certainly, it is a major issue. Diabetes leads to many debilitating and life-threatening illnesses. Up to 60 per cent of type 2 diabetes is preventable. Considering that obesity costs this state \$11.2 billion annually, preventive measures will greatly reduce this burden, freeing up funds that can be used elsewhere. Diabetes Queensland is only one of the organisations that is 100 per cent supportive of the Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill. It welcomes the inclusion of non-traditional sectors in a health prevention and promotional agency.

This week, the Heart Foundation was also very active at Parliament House. I was among those who took the time to have my blood pressure tested and to talk to staff. The Heart Foundation is another hardworking and valuable organisation that will benefit greatly from this bill.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr KNUTH:** I have been here for 15 years. After 12 months, every member of parliament looks very different. In closing, I wish to commend the work of the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee. I fully support the Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill.