




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Record of Proceedings, 28 February 2019

HEALTH AND WELLBEING QUEENSLAND BILL

Message from Governor

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (11.17 am): I present a message from His Excellency the Governor.

Mr SPEAKER: The message from His Excellency recommends the Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING QUEENSLAND BILL 2019

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, PAUL de JERSEY AC, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intitled—


A Bill for an Act to establish Health and Wellbeing Queensland to improve the health and wellbeing of the Queensland population, and to amend this Act, the Hospital Foundations Act 2018 and the Public Service Act 2008 for particular purposes

GOVERNOR

Date: 26 February 2019

Tabled paper: Message, dated 26 February 2019, from His Excellency the Governor recommending the Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019 [278](#).

Introduction

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (11.18 am): I present a bill for an act to establish Health and Wellbeing Queensland to improve the health and wellbeing of the Queensland population, and to amend this Act, the Hospital Foundations Act 2018 and the Public Service Act 2008 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019 [279](#).

Tabled paper: Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019, explanatory notes [280](#).

This bill will deliver the Palaszczuk government's election commitment to create a health promotion commission by establishing Health and Wellbeing Queensland as a statutory body. While there is much we disagree about, I hope those opposite will join me in supporting this bill because the obesity crisis facing Queensland should be above politics.

The number of obese and overweight Queenslanders is not just a statistic. It is how 1.26 million Queenslanders live their life: unable to fit in an airline or a bus seat, unable to run with their kids; many spend 3½ days a week strapped to a dialysis machine; some cannot find work; some have trouble

finding or maintaining a relationship. We all represent many folk like this. When I visit my local shops, medical centres or schools I am struck by how much harder life is if you are obese, how it impacts every aspect of your day-to-day life, not to mention the number of days you can expect to live.

While the experiences of obesity are individual, the causes are not—or at least not entirely. It is convenient for some to blame individuals for their weight. However, the personal responsibility frame has the benefit of absolving everyone else of responsibility. It leads us to ignore the root causes and, worse still, the intentional actions which drive the obesity epidemic. When we make it about personal choice, we let governments off the hook; we let the fast-food industry off the hook; we let planners and developers off the hook; we let schools, supermarkets, doctors and employers off the hook.

While I accept that every one of us has to take some responsibility for our own health, I have not seen any evidence anywhere that the obesity epidemic in Australia is the result of waves of people waking up and deciding one day that they would prefer to be fat. They do not decide to be fat; our society decides to make them fat. All of the social determinants of overall health apply just as equally to obesity: poverty, poor housing, and insecure and poorly paid work. First nations people are disproportionately affected as they are in just about everything health related. It all makes sense when you think about it. Obesity has much in common with the other big health policy challenges like smoking, skin cancer and drinking. In one's 20s obesity affects their lifestyle. In one's 30s and onwards it affects their health—diabetes, heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, back pain, osteoarthritis and many cancers.

The latest 2018 Chief Health Officer report found that 2.5 million Queensland adults and 224,000 Queensland children are overweight or obese. That is two in three adults. That is one in four children. That is because Queenslanders have a terrible diet, with one-third of their daily energy intake coming from unhealthy foods. It is not because bad food tastes better—some might argue that and say it is all about poor discipline, but it is not. Big fast-food chains such as McDonald's, Hungry Jack's, KFC, Wendy's, Krispy Kreme, Uncle Toby's, Smith's, Nestle and big sugary drink manufacturers such as Coca-Cola and PepsiCo spend hundreds of millions of dollars in advertising, in securing the best product placement to ensure our kids see their products and pester us for them relentlessly, and the worst tactic of all is that they make their products as cheaply as possible with the most amount of sugar and fat to keep people coming back. It is no wonder that this disproportionately affects poorer people the most.

Obesity rates are 49 per cent higher in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas of Queensland compared to advantaged areas. Obesity rates are also higher in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations and those living in a rural or remote part of Queensland. We do not need a government agency to tell people to have more control over their own life or their loved ones' life. Most people who are overweight want to be healthier. What we can do as a government is affect the conditions in which people are born, grow up, live, work and age. If these underlying conditions are not addressed, people will keep turning to cheap, sugary, fatty and easily accessible food.

While public health efforts will never rival McDonald's or Coca-Cola for their advertising budget, we can listen to the experts and implement what is proven to work. This is why we have invited the experts in to parliament today to start helping us right away. The AMAQ, the Cancer Council, Diabetes Queensland, the Heart Foundation, UIIH, Apunipima, Griffith University, the Stroke Foundation, Nutrition Australia, Bicycle Queensland, Healthy Harold and many more will all be part of making sure Health and Wellbeing Queensland has what it needs to take on the big guys.

About 15 per cent of hospitalisations in Queensland are associated with preventable risk factors such as obesity. The people of Queensland need a champion against the goliath food companies that will use every trick in the book to keep them coming back to their unhealthy food. This health promotion body will be a champion for change at the individual and local community level, as well as partnering with governments and businesses to advocate for system changes to make communities healthier, especially disadvantaged communities.

The Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019 will establish Health and Wellbeing Queensland as a statutory body that can work across boundaries to promote health and wellbeing by funding and coordinating efforts to address the factors that prevent Queenslanders from being active and healthy. It will do this by reducing the burden of chronic diseases through targeting risk factors for those diseases such as obesity, low physical activity and poor nutrition. It will also contribute to reducing the health inequality that exists in our community. This is the Palaszczuk government's vision for advancing Queensland.

We have set a target that by 2026 there will be a 10 per cent increase in the proportion of Queenslanders with a healthy body weight. Health and Wellbeing Queensland will build on existing initiatives and strategies in the community and government to bring business, industry, community

groups and researchers together. By providing grants and developing partnerships, Health and Wellbeing Queensland will be the spark to change the conditions in which Queenslanders live, work and play and give them a real fighting chance at a happy, healthy life.

Linking in with researchers and academics, it will focus on funding and supporting evidence based and locally supported initiatives that will make a difference to the health of children, families and vulnerable communities. Supported by funding and investment in research, Health and Wellbeing Queensland will be able to promote a cross-sectoral approach to health promotion. Health and Wellbeing Queensland can and will make a positive and sustainable difference.

As a statutory body, Health and Wellbeing Queensland will be a separate legal entity, directly accountable to the Minister for Health for its performance. It will have a board of up to 10 members, a chief executive officer and staff. Up to four of the board members will be chief executives of government departments, which will allow government input and promote alignment with the public sector. The other members will have experience across a range of sectors including law, business, public health, academia, community services and the not-for-profit sector.

The bill also requires at least one person to be an Aboriginal person or a Torres Strait Islander person. The diverse board membership will promote the collaboration across health and non-health sectors necessary to contribute to social change. Board members will be appointed by the Governor in Council for up to four-year terms.

The performance of Health and Wellbeing Queensland will be monitored to ensure it is making progress towards reducing risk factors for chronic disease in the community and reducing health inequality. Health and Wellbeing Queensland will be required to include information in its annual report about functions it has performed during the year and how efficient and effective it has been. It will also be subject to directions by the minister, and the minister may ask Health and Wellbeing Queensland to provide information about its projects and activities.

Amendments are proposed to the Hospital Foundations Act. The amendments will allow for a foundation to be established to support Health and Wellbeing Queensland to achieve its objectives. The CEO of Health and Wellbeing Queensland will be responsible for investigating whether a foundation would be viable and a good source of attracting new revenue.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to making Queenslanders among the healthiest people in the world. We are not going to blame them for the actions of big multinational food and beverage companies that profit from their misery. We are going to give them a fighting chance—a champion for their health and wellbeing. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. SJ MILES (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (11.29 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Whiting): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee.