




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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HEALTH AND WELLBEING QUEENSLAND BILL

Second Reading

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (6.53 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I acknowledge the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee report on the bill tabled on 18 April 2019. I thank the committee for its careful consideration of the bill. I also thank the many stakeholders who made submissions to the committee's inquiry.

Queensland is suffering from an obesity crisis—2.5 million adults and almost 225,000 children are overweight or obese in this state. That is two in three adults and one in four children. That is far, far too many people at risk of disease, early death and a poor quality of life.

The Palaszczuk government made a commitment to Queensland at the last election to create a statewide health promotion commission. This bill delivers on that commitment and it demonstrates the level of priority we have given to improving the health of Queenslanders. We have made it one of our top priorities to increase the proportion of Queensland adults and children with a healthy body weight.

Health and Wellbeing Queensland will help us achieve that goal. This new agency will look at the environment in which Queenslanders live—how we live, work and play and what we need to live a healthy life. It will also help reduce health inequity in this state by focusing on the groups experiencing poorer health and places where there are fewer opportunities to be healthy. That includes those in regional communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our state.

Health and Wellbeing Queensland will be able to use grants for evidence based activities and innovative ideas that will improve health outcomes for Queenslanders. The agency will adopt a new way of working and partnering with local communities, academic institutions and government agencies. It will develop partnerships with public health experts, academics, health professionals and community organisations, as well as with local, state and federal government agencies.

I note that all 33 submissions received by the parliamentary committee expressed their support for establishing an agency like Health and Wellbeing Queensland. These submissions were from peak bodies and key areas of the health, recreation and sport sector. It is clear that health professionals, community groups, researchers and members of the public are on board.

Submissions to the committee's inquiry supported the governance arrangements for the new agency as they are set out in the bill. I am also pleased that Health and Wellbeing Queensland has the support of key health organisations including Diabetes Queensland, the Cancer Council, the Stroke Foundation and the Public Health Association of Australia. It also has the support of recognised health research institutes including QUT and QIMR Berghofer. This is important because it will take all of our shared knowledge, expertise and resources to tackle obesity and chronic disease.

The only recommendation of the committee in its report was that the bill be passed, and I appreciate the committee's support for the bill. The committee noted during its inquiry that clause 45 of the bill is a potential departure from the fundamental legislative principle regarding whether the bill has sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals. Clause 45 provides that a board member or the chief executive officer must give notice to the minister if the person is charged with or convicted of an indictable offence. The Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel has been consulted about the drafting of clause 45, and I propose to move amendments to address this issue. The amendments will ensure that the right to protection against self-incrimination is adequately protected and that the clause does not have unintended consequences.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to making Queenslanders among the healthiest people in the world. We have an opportunity to tackle one of our biggest public health issues—unhealthy weight. We know the causes of this public health challenge are complex and that a person's socio-economic status, whether they are Indigenous and the remoteness of where they live all impact on their health. We are taking on this challenge because we believe everyone deserves to be healthy. I commend the bill to the House.