

Health and Ambulance Services Committee

Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2015

Report No. 11, 55th Parliament

Government Response

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

That the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services outline to the House the education strategy proposed by the Department.

Government response: Supported

The Minister will outline to the House the education strategy proposed by the Department during the second-reading of the Bill. Details of the proposed consumer and business education strategy for the menu labelling scheme are **attached**.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that amendments be included to require the relevant Minister to provide notification, by way of gazette notice, of temporary appointments to the public panel of assessors and the professional panel of assessors as soon as practicable after appointment.

Government response: Supported

The Government supports the Committee's recommendation for additional amendments to require the Minister to notify, by way of gazette notice, temporary appointments to public and professional panels of assessors. This measure will ensure greater transparency of temporary appointments made under the *Health Ombudsman Act 2013*.

Additional amendment—*Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011*

The Government notes the non-government committee members' concerns about the operation of the proposed amendments to allow for temporary appointments to Hospital and Health Boards under the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011*.

However, it is important to understand that the Bill does not amend the process for suspension or removal of a Board member from office. Nor does it amend the process by which the Governor in Council can dismiss all members of a Board and appoint an administrator to administer the Hospital and Health Service.

The proposed amendments to the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011* are designed to ensure that Boards can continue to provide effective governance following the unexpected departure of Board members, a situation that the Department of Health has experienced in the past.

The Government notes the Committee's support for ensuring Hospital and Health Services are able to function effectively with full membership. The amendments will help to ensure Hospital and Health Boards are properly constituted at all times.

To address concerns raised by non-government members regarding transparency of temporary appointments to Hospital and Health Boards, the Government proposes an amendment in consideration in detail to require the Minister to notify, by way of gazette notice, temporary appointments to Boards. This amendment is consistent with the proposed amendment to the *Health Ombudsman Act 2013* to be moved during consideration-in-detail of the Bill.

Menu Labelling for Fast Food Education Strategy

The Department of Health is proposing a range of activities to support businesses and consumers in the implementation of the *Menu Labelling for Fast Food* scheme under the *Food Act 2006*.

The Department will release industry user guides and fact sheets following passage of the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 to support impacted businesses. These resources will outline the scheme's requirements, businesses captured and details relating to the commencement of offence provisions. They will be sent directly to the estimated 70 food business companies and the seven peak industry groups identified during the consultation process as being captured by the provisions and will be publically available on the Department's website.

In addition, the New South Wales Food Authority maintains a cross-sector Menu Labelling Reference Group developed for the implementation and ongoing management of their Fast Choices menu labelling provisions. The purpose of the Reference Group has evolved over time from being specifically focused on the provision of a consultative and advisory role in the implementation, consumer education, and evaluation phases of the Fast Choices initiative to a broader role of providing input on associated nutrition labelling developments. This group currently meets twice a year and consists of representatives from the food industry, public health and academia. The New South Wales Food Authority has invited Queensland representation on this group.

Consumer education activities will be delivered in 2016-17 to help consumers to correctly interpret nutrition information on menus and make healthier choices when purchasing fast-food.

It is proposed that the consumer education activities:

- will be designed to reach all Queenslanders, and particularly adolescents and young adults, as the highest fast-food consumers
- as well as influencing healthier choices, will include a focus on the use of kilojoule information, whether when in a queue in-store, or at home ordering fast-food over the phone or the internet, or on-the-go and ordering food using mobile apps, and
- consider a mix of out-of-home and digital marketing, media, public relations strategies, and targeted tools and resources.

The key messages and approach will be informed by findings from market research on consumers' awareness, understanding and attitudes towards kilojoules, fast-food and menu labelling.

The 2016-17 consumer education activities will be preceded by the *Healthier. Happier. Straight Answers* campaign, which is designed to dispel myths about diet and physical activity. As it will include kilojoule-specific messages, it will act as an introduction to educate Queenslanders about what kilojoules are, and how many kilojoules should be consumed. The *Healthier. Happier. Straight Answers* campaign is anticipated to be delivered in April 2016.