

Health Consumers Queensland submission

Health and other Legislation Amendment Bill (2021)

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To: <mailto:legislation@health.qld.gov.au>

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About us

Health Consumers Queensland is the peak organisation representing the interests of health consumers and carers in the state. Health Consumers Queensland is a not-for-profit organisation and a registered health promotion charity, and we believe in improving health outcomes for people in Queensland.

Consumers are people who use, or are potential users, of health services including their family and carers. Consumers may participate as individuals, groups, organizations of consumers, consumer representatives or communities.

Our priority focus is on consumer engagement that influences and leads improvements and delivers better health outcomes for all Queenslanders. We achieve this through our Queensland-wide health consumer network, tailored training and skills development programs, and maximising opportunities for consumer representation at all levels of the health system.

Consumer engagement is when health consumers actively participate in their own healthcare and in health policy, planning, service delivery and evaluation at service and agency levels.



Our Six Strategic Objectives

1. Enabling health consumers and healthcare staff statewide

We build consumer, staff and system capacity to design a health system together through collaborative, integrated and consumer-centred approaches by providing support, strategic advice, training and advocacy.

2. Acting as an agent of change for consumer-centred health care

In partnership with consumers and healthcare staff, we act as a strong voice on system wide issues to influence key decision makers, policies and models of care to deliver a high quality consumer-centred health care system for all Queenslanders.

3. Enhancing effective partnerships

We develop and grow effective organisational partnerships locally, nationally and internationally to achieve consumer-centred health care for all Queenslanders.

4. Building and using evidence

We support consumers and staff to be involved in co-creating the evidence base for health system development and transformation. We act on the evidence of the human lived experience of the health system to build capacity of consumers and to leverage system change.

5. Being transparent and enduring

We demonstrate transparency and responsiveness on behalf of consumers, community and our funders. We maintain strong leadership and governance to assure organisational sustainability and longevity. We support the passion, energy and courage of our staff and members of our Network.

6. Addressing the social determinants of health

We acknowledge that systemic reform of the health system requires recognising the social determinants of health and co-designing models of care that address them.

Areas of Focus

Our areas of focus in implementing our strategic objectives

In partnership with consumers (including vulnerable groups) and staff, we act as a strong voice on system wide issues such as:

- **Healthcare Rights:** Breaches of healthcare rights which prevent fair, just and affordable access to healthcare;
- **Quality & Safety:** Where quality and safety and/or consumer experiences are of concern;
- **Healthcare Standards:** Embedding healthcare standards around consumer engagement, comprehensive care and health literacy; or
- **Systemic Issues:** Complex, difficult or contentious systemic issues.

Health Consumers Queensland's comments:

Our organisation welcomes the opportunity to provide both an organisational and consumer response on the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021.

We are broadly supportive of all the proposed changes and only provide comments where we want to offer a consumer perspective or something new to consider in its implementation (not the legislation itself).

We are supportive of the changes to legislation that will enable students to be involved in a Termination of Pregnancy (of course ensuring the consumer has a chance to accept or decline the student's involvement as is the case with all other procedures) and that human milk is excluded from the definition of "tissue" to enable pre-term infants and other babies to receive this milk quickly and easily.

Proposed changes to the Ambulance Services Act 1991

It's not clear to Health Consumers Queensland if QAS employees stretches to cover volunteers. If so, we suggest clear plans are in place so that current and prospective volunteers know about their obligations too.

Absolutely support the need to remove the requirement that the Commissioner must be no older than 65 years.

Proposed changes to the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011

Support the inclusion of audiologists, social workers, dieticians, speech pathologists and exercise physiologists, who are not registered under the National Law, but are regulated, to have access to The Viewer because the existing safeguards will apply to the new group of health professionals and unauthorized access is an offence.

It's important that consumers are informed that more health professionals will be able to access their information via The Viewer; and that consumers can control who can and cannot access their information. Consumers have clearly identified what is important to them in the [Queensland Digital Health Consumer Charter Details | Health Consumers Queensland \(hcq.org.au\)](#). When The Viewer was first developed, health consumers were involved in the development of the communications to consumers about the Viewer; so we'd recommend this is done again to communicate about the extension of health professionals who can use it/access your information.

Proposed changes to the Mental Health Act 2016

We agree to the proposed changes that are in alignment with the Human Rights Act.