

## Queensland Plan Ambassadors Council 11 March Communiqué

The Ambassadors Council held its first 2020 meeting on 11 March 2020 in Brisbane.

The Council welcomed a new member, Ms Elsa Larsen. Ms Larsen is actively involved in raising community awareness of ovarian cancer and advocating for its prevention and treatment. Ms Larsen is an Ambassador for Ovarian Cancer Australia, has a Master of Information Studies and is a qualified librarian. Ms Larsen will bring unique insight into, and passionate advocacy for, the health and wellbeing of Queensland women to the work of the Council.

The contribution of Ms Erin Faithfull, who resigned in January 2020, was recognised by Ambassadors. Ms Faithfull was appointed in April 2017 and the Council benefited from her lived experience in and close ties to, a regional community.

Ambassadors were pleased to welcome to the meeting the Honourable Stirling Hinchliffe MP, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs. Minister Hinchliffe is the Premier's representative responsible for the Queensland Plan.

During the meeting, Ambassadors also met with representatives from peak bodies and the public sector on rural and regional Queensland, sport and wellbeing, domestic and family violence, and youth crime and the role of police. These topics support four of the nine Queensland Plan's foundational areas: Regions, Health and wellbeing, People, and Community.

### Rural and Regional Queensland

The Council is invested in supporting and building thriving regions where each region can discover and develop their distinctive character, culture and heritage. Ambassadors were joined by the Acting Executive Director for the Office for Rural and Regional Queensland, who presented on the second round of Regional Community Forums (the forums) held across Queensland on 24 February 2020.

The forums bring members of the local communities, regional stakeholders and government representatives together each quarter to discuss local priorities and opportunities, and consider what outcomes are most important to each regional community. Ambassadors were provided an overview of the conversations from the forums and the resulting priorities for both government and forum members to explore locally.

Ambassadors acknowledged the strong ties between the Queensland Plan and the Office for Rural and Regional Queensland, with both focusing on liveability in Queensland's regions. Ambassadors discussed how they could explore region specific opportunities to strengthen regional economies and services.

### Sport and recreation

The Queensland Plan recognises the significance of taking personal responsibility for health and wellbeing, so children learn to live healthily and develop habits that last a lifetime, and Queenslanders can enjoy the best balance between work and life. The Council acknowledges health and wellbeing are building blocks for fulfilling lives.

Ambassadors meet the Executive Director from the Department of Housing and Public Works who presented on *Activate! Queensland. Activate! Queensland*, the state's first ever ten-year sport and active recreation strategy. The strategy is a coordinated whole-of-government investment of \$1.3 billion over ten years and aims to ensure all Queenslanders have a chance to get active, to excel and to improve their lives through movement. The Ambassadors heard that *Activate! Queensland* focuses on integrated and coordinated cross-government and multi-sector approach using place-based and co-designed initiatives.

Ambassadors discussed the challenges faced by communities and families today and the impact this is having on health and wellbeing. Ambassadors heard how they could use their collective expertise and the knowledge of their communities to drive *Activate! Queensland* forward. Embedding activity in the daily lives of Queenslanders and encouraging lifelong movement, will support more Queenslanders to be healthy and promote better connected communities. Ambassadors were encouraged to create partnerships that maximise the impact of government and industry actions to

benefit an active Queensland. Further information is available on the Queensland Government website [qld.gov.au/sportrecstrategy](http://qld.gov.au/sportrecstrategy).

### Domestic and family violence

The Queensland Plan recognises people are our greatest asset. A Queensland free from domestic and family violence allows Queenslanders to feel safe in their own homes and children to grow up in safe and secure environments.

Ambassadors met the Director of the Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Strategy Implementation team in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet who discussed the state's *Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy*. The Strategy sets the direction for collaborative action to end DFV in Queensland, encouraging partnerships between the government, community and business.

Ambassadors heard that certain groups within the community face either a higher risk of being subjected to DFV or face greater challenges in accessing DFV support services. Ambassadors discussed the challenges faced by vulnerable cohorts across the state and those in rural and regional communities more generally. Ambassadors also discussed the value of integrated service delivery and responses for these individuals. Ambassadors discussed how they and others in the community have opportunities to collaborate with government reforms, to establish foundations to shift community attitudes and to influence community attitudes and behaviours to DFV and gender equality.

### Youth crime and the role of police

The Queensland Plan recognises the level of crime and its impact on public safety are directly related to the liveability of local communities. Communities thrive when we create opportunities for everyone and increase social cohesiveness and community pride.

Ambassadors welcomed the President of the Queensland Police Union, to discuss the impacts of youth crime and the effects on the individual police officers that deal with young offenders. Ambassadors engaged in this important discussion to further understand the challenges facing police officers, families and the community in tackling youth crime. Issues discussed included family breakdown, availability of support services within the community following release from detention, and the impact of cheap and accessible drugs on youth crime.

Ambassadors supported a focus on community led initiatives and emphasised the important role of children growing up in a safe and secure environment. Ambassadors recognised support for families is essential to supporting young people and, in turn, social cohesion. Ambassadors discussed engaging and empowering families, addressing mental health and influencing community attitudes and behaviours to youth crime and DFV.

### Productivity Commission report – Regional Tax Concessions

Ambassadors discussed the recently published Productivity Commission's Remote Area Tax Concessions and Payments Report. The Productivity Commission made several findings and recommendations relating to the Zone Tax Offset, Fringe Benefits Tax Remote Area Concessions and the Remote Area Allowance. The findings in the recently published report are consistent with those in the draft report released in September 2019.

Given the challenges faced by regional Australia, Ambassadors were significantly concerned about the proposed changes. Ambassadors discussed the direct and material impacts on many residents of regional and remote Queensland as well as state agencies that rely directly or indirectly on remote area concessions and payments to attract and retain staff.

Ambassadors welcomed the federal government's decision to reject the Productivity Commission's recommendations and took time to reflect positively on their collective advocacy efforts in raising awareness of the draft report and its recommendations in their communities.