



## The Queensland Plan Ambassadors Council

### Meeting Communique 14-15 September 2017

The Queensland Plan Ambassadors Council held its third meeting of 2017 in Brisbane on 14 and 15 September.

Over the course of the two-day meeting, Ambassadors welcomed a range of community organisations, peak body representatives and government sector representatives. Representatives joined the Ambassadors in their discussion of three of the nine Queensland Plan foundation areas:

- Education: building life skills and inspiring bright minds
- Community: making connections
- Health and wellbeing: being healthy and active.

Ambassadors noted the range of positive initiatives underway across Queensland in each of these areas, and the gains made towards improving the lives of Queenslanders.

#### Education: building life skills and inspiring bright minds

Ambassadors noted the significant progress that has been made in Queensland education. In 2016, more than 70,000 children were enrolled in a kindergarten program, taking kindergarten participation to more than 95%. Queensland is one of the most improved states since NAPLAN's introduction in 2008, and the gap in Queensland certification for Year 12 state school completers continues to narrow with 97 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students gaining a Year 12 certification, compared to almost 98 per cent for non-Indigenous students.

There are ongoing challenges in the sector, including ensuring that the vocational education and training sector continues to meet the skills needs that support Queensland's economic growth – underpinned by a strong TAFE system. Importantly, a rapidly changing world presents a constant challenge for providers from kindergarten to tertiary education to ensure that learning environments, curriculum, and teaching methods are able to respond to the changing skills mix needed for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### Community: making connections

In discussions, Ambassadors noted that as the most decentralised state in Australia, we must recognise both the strength of our regional cities and towns, as well as the challenges that our different communities face.

Community representatives noted that the Queensland spirit has continued to be demonstrated – it shines through as Queenslanders face natural disasters together, and as we come together in preparing to celebrate the Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast in 2018.

Community and government representatives discussed some of the challenges facing Queensland communities – including rising income inequality, cost of living challenges, the emergence of a digital divide, homelessness, child safety and closing the gap – and the global, national, regional, state, local forces affecting our communities. They noted that there are positive signs, commending Queensland government strategies and innovation, such as Advance Queensland, the jobs agenda, and discrete initiatives like Logan Together, which mobilises community resources to ensure that every child gets the support, love and care they need to grow to be the best they can be.



## Health and wellbeing: being healthy and active

Panel members noted that the use of co-design and preventative models of health has grown, including the establishment of the Queensland Healthy Futures Commission that aims to avoid obesity and chronic disease rates. Surveys indicate that good health is valued more than ever before, with a 15 per cent increase in healthy food consumed outside the home and fitness flourishing over the last five years. Long-term strategic plans are seeking to improve capacity across sectors to address health concerns, for example, through the inclusion and coverage of mental health in pre-service education for teachers and early childhood staff. This reflects broader trends toward community-based health models.

Representatives from the health sector noted ongoing challenges in the health sector. Though the use of early intervention and prevention-based models has increased, they cited a need for an increased focus on prevention and primary health care. As rates of mental health issues remain steady, alcohol and amphetamine use were recognised as continuing to present challenges to Queensland communities. The gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life expectancy remains 10 years, with ongoing challenges associated with disengagement with the health system. Rural health delivery challenges and innovation were also discussed – noting the important link between health and wellbeing and other foundation areas.

## Looking ahead

Ambassadors recognised the long term nature of the plan and its goals, noting that the changing world context will mean that Queensland faces ongoing challenges – and that the solutions to these challenges will require us to understand the complex interaction of a range of global, cultural, social and economic issues. As the world moves towards an increasingly digital future, it will be critical that the Queensland continues to work towards inclusive economic growth, so that all individuals, especially those suffering from disadvantage, should be guaranteed access to the benefits and opportunities ahead.

Connectivity and relationships underpin communities, and are at the heart of Queensland's future. Ambassadors were encouraged by discussions with community representatives, who identified fertile prospects for place-based community development initiatives. Queenslanders will need to continue to work together to develop innovative solutions to service delivery challenges across the education, community and health and wellbeing foundation areas.

The next meeting of the Council will be held in February, with a focus on two more of the Queensland Plan's foundation areas: Infrastructure: being connected and Environment: achieving balance.

The Ambassadors Council will continue to engage with representatives from across the Queensland community, and welcomes ongoing interest in the Plan. If you would like to contact the Ambassadors Council, please email [gldplan.ambassadors@premiers.qld.gov.au](mailto:gldplan.ambassadors@premiers.qld.gov.au).



## Queensland Plan Ambassadors

The Honourable Tony McGrady (Chair)

Mr Mark Henley (Deputy Chair)

Ms Karen Tully

Mr Daniel Gswind

Mr Leon Yeatman

Ms Kate Tully

Mr Taj Pabari

Professor Allan Dale

Ms Erin Faithful

Professor John Cole

Ms Shelley Argent

Emeritus Professor Roger Scott



## Queensland Plan Ambassadors Council Guests and Panel Participants

Michael Hogan, Director-General, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

Brent McCracken, Group Executive Child and Family Services, UnitingCare Queensland

Alan Le May, General Manager Queensland, The Smith Family

Judy Tanna, The Smith Family

Laura Barnes, Senior Manager, Queensland Council of Social Service

Julie McDonald, Member, Embracing 2018 Legacy Advisory Committee and medal winning Olympian

Dr Geoff Woolcock, Research Fellow, Regional Community Development, University of Southern Queensland

Stacie Wilson, Acting Assistant Director-General State Schools Performance, Department of Education and Training

David Lucas, Executive Director Training and Skills, Department of Education and Training

Robert Petherbridge, Executive Director, TAFE Queensland

Michael Tizard, Chief Executive Officer, Creche and Kindergarten Association

Claude Jones, Director, Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

Jacqueline Wilton, Director, Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

Professor John Allan, Executive Director, Queensland Health

Professor Ian Wronski, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, James Cook University

Neil Willmetts, Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council

Michael O'Hanlon, Workplace Engagement Manager, *beyondblue*

Dr Jeannette Young, Chief Health Officer Queensland

Dr Rolf Gomes, Founder, Heart of Australia

Adrian Carson, Chief Executive Officer, Institute for Urban Indigenous Health

Professor Frank Gannon, Director and Chief Executive Officer, QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute

Cheryl Vardon, Principal Commissioner, Queensland Family and Child Commission

Megan Campbell, Centre Manager, Australian Centre for Health Services Innovation

Yasmin Khan, Chair, Ethnic Communities Council Queensland

Steve Greenwood, Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Futures Institute

Dr Lee-Ann Perry, Executive Director, Queensland Catholic Education Commission

