

Tuesday 3 May 2022

JOINT LETTER from Queensland-based consumer, community and clinician groups

Putting the care back into healthcare

Joint open statement to all Federal election political parties and candidates from Queensland-based consumer, community and clinician groups. The issues we are raising are held by healthcare stakeholders in all jurisdictions across Australia.

Our health and healthcare systems affect all of us and the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders impacts on everyone and everything we do. The health sector also employs more people than any other sector in Australia.

In the lead up to the 2022 federal election Queensland's health consumer, disability, older-person and multicultural peak bodies, together with clinician groups and their unions and representative bodies including GPs, nurses and midwives, stand together to call for a strong, integrated, innovative, collaborative and quality health system for all.

We want to ensure investment in, and prioritisation of, our health system aligns with its value and importance to our society and takes into account the diverse needs of all people.

It's vital all political parties and candidates put the 'care' back into healthcare through thoughtful, strategic and outcome-based policies and plans to build on and improve our existing system.

We know that it is the health and wellbeing of people that keeps our economies strong and our lives flourishing. We need to focus on preventative health, meeting the holistic care needs of health consumers and meeting demand for a quality workforce with strategies to reward good care and its outcomes.

We want to see action that ensures:

- Everyone has equitable access to an integrated and well-coordinated healthcare system and that funding supports this integration (addressing the funding mechanisms at Commonwealth and state levels to support this integration).
- The healthcare of Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities is prioritised and led by them.
- People with disability and complex health needs are prioritised and catered for as well as those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and older people.
- Improved health outcomes for those living in rural and remote communities.
- A truly integrated primary, community and tertiary health system that is incentivised to keep people well and accessing care when and where they need it.
- The healthcare system is consumer-centred and consumer-led.
- Commonwealth and State/Territory governments need to agree on the establishment and on-going support for a national centre of excellence in disease prevention, control and dissemination of authoritative and respected policy advice and recommendations. Consumers should be a key part of the governance and decision-making of this centre.

Australia's universal health system is recognised across the world however we can make it better by working together – across different levels of government, across government departments, across different health and community sectors, between health professionals – and, importantly, seeing health consumers as active decision-makers in their own health and wellbeing and co-designers of improved health systems and services.

Over the past two years through COVID-19, we have witnessed the agility, innovation and commitment of consumers and health professionals coming together to co-design solutions and experience the benefits of collaboration. Collectively we must invest in robust and ongoing health workforce planning to ensure consumers have better access to safe and sustainable healthcare. We need to be innovative to meet the ever-increasing demand and complexity of people's health needs.

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The Aged Care Royal Commission, Disability Royal Commission, Inquiry into Mental Health and Suicide Prevention and reviews of our systems all point to the imperative for action to improve health consumers' access to equitable, quality and integrated healthcare built upon integrated workforce planning and delivery across the care continuum (prevention, primary, acute, sub-acute, community-based care, mental health, alcohol and other drugs care, palliative care, end of life care, and suicide prevention) with health consumers at the centre.

It is critical that we build policy and decision-making with inclusive mechanisms that directly involve those who depend on the healthcare system (the consumers) and those who work in the healthcare system (the health professionals). We need to deliver better integration across aged care, disability care, education, housing, the justice system, employment, transport, access to fresh food, and well-resourced community-based supports, no matter where you live.

We call on all parties and candidates to commit to innovating and improving our health system so it is healthier, agile, collaborative and better able to meet the diverse needs of Queenslanders - all while being affordable and accessible for all people.

We have a universal obligation to improve the health and wellbeing journey for each person in our communities and ensure nobody is left behind.

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Read more about the organisations' Federal election platforms:

- Australian College of General Practitioners: https://www.racgp.org.au/advocacy/its-time-to-care	- Australian College of Rural & Remote Medicine https://www.acrrm.org.au/about-us/about-the-college/advocacy/election
- Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland election platform: https://eccq.com.au/publications/	- Pharmaceutical Society Australia: https://www.psa.org.au/actioncentre/
- QDN: https://qdn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/MyDisabilityVoteCounts_FINAL.pdf	- Queensland Nurses' and Midwives' Union: https://www.qnmu.org.au/FederalElection22
- RDAQ Federal Election Platform 2022: https://www.rdaa.com.au/resources/election-2022	- RDAQ: https://www.rdaq.com.au/