

3.4 Health determinants

“Most of the burden of disease affecting children and young people and culminating in health problems in later life is the result of complex interactions between individuals and socioeconomic and environmental determinants of their health. Health policy, programs and services which address the determinants of health are necessary to prevent the occurrence, and reduce the burden of illhealth.”

Strategic Policy Framework for Children’s and Young People’s Health 2002-2007⁴

The factors that lead to someone developing disease or a mental disorder are likely to have their beginnings years earlier, through a complex chain of events and interactions among the individual, the environment and broader social and economic factors.¹⁰ Determinants of health is the term used for those factors that have either a positive or negative influence on physical and mental health at the individual or population level.

The aim of this section is to answer the following questions:

- Are the factors that determine good health for young Queenslanders changing for the better?
- Is it the same for everyone?
- Where and for whom are these factors changing?

Health determinants can be broadly divided into ‘upstream’ determinants (education, employment, income, living and working conditions), ‘midstream’ (health behaviours and psychosocial factors) and ‘downstream’ (physiological and biological factors).⁵ In this section, the upstream determinants are addressed in sections on environmental factors and socioeconomic factors, and midstream determinants in community capacity and health behaviour sections. Environmental, socioeconomic and community capacity dimensions impact on physical and mental health within the spheres of societal or community, household and individual determinants of health.

As this report focuses on modifiable determinants of health, the person-related factors dimension of the *National Health Performance Framework* is not included. All determinants of health indicators are reported in the domain where there is the greatest opportunity for health gains. Thus, physiological and biological factors which may be partially addressed through behaviour change have been included in the health behaviour section of this report.

Actions to address these health determinants are described in section 3.5.