

# Director-General Foreword 2018–19

As Director-General for Queensland Health, I am pleased to present the Annual Report 2018–19.

Queensland Health aims to provide leadership, direction and a collaborative approach to enable the health system to deliver quality services that are safe and responsive for Queenslanders. In support of this, over the past year we have continued to execute significant bodies of work contributing to our vision for healthier Queenslanders.

One of our key objectives is promoting and protecting the health of Queenslanders. In 2018–19 we mandated the sale, promotion and advertisement of only healthier drinks in Hospital and Health Services. We also developed suicide prevention strategies and programs to be used in the health service delivery context, including enrolling over 100 school-based youth nurses in suicide risk assessment and management training, and the development of a web-based statewide clinical pathway for the assessment and management of suicide risk in general practices.

Another key objective for Queensland Health is improving health outcomes through better access to services for Queenslanders. We dedicated \$16 million over two years to expand the scope and reach of the *Deadly Choices Healthy Lifestyle Program*, which aims to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to make healthy choices, and focuses on good nutrition and risk factors such as physical inactivity, smoking and substance abuse. Our 2018 *Closing the Gap* report revealed that Queensland now leads the way nationally with the highest life expectancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and females and the lowest life expectancy gaps. We also funded an additional 160 nurse navigator positions to support patients with chronic illnesses navigate the health system and access care appropriate for their needs.

Some other highlights for 2018–19 include:

- establishing Health and Wellbeing Queensland to drive change to help Queenslanders make healthier choices and address high overweight and obesity rates. Health and Wellbeing Queensland will bring together the community, private sector and all levels of government to drive collaboration and change
- launching the *Our Child IT* solution, which draws data from government systems to enable rapid information sharing between agencies to assist with locating children in care who are missing. This initiative was in response to the Queensland Family and Child Commission report *When a child is missing: Remembering Tiahleigh*
- enhancing our ability to respond in state emergencies by arranging for the Royal Flying Doctor Service to urgently fly-in mental health staff to flood affected areas in north and western Queensland
- launching a new five-year plan, *Shifting Minds: Queensland Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategic Plan 2018–2023*, for improving the mental health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders.

Initiatives like these help us ensure Queensland Health provides a health system that meets the current and future needs of Queenslanders.

Earlier this year, I announced that I will retire from my role as Director-General in September 2019. Working in Queensland Health has been the biggest honour of my career. Fostering a culture in Queensland Health that enables greater support and trust for the wonderful work done across the system is something I am extremely proud of.

Above all else, healthcare is delivered by people for people, and it is how we come together to do good things—things that make a material difference to people's lives—that I am most proud of.

I thank our hard-working staff and our volunteers for their contributions to the department and to the people of Queensland. I know the significant difference Queensland Health makes to this state will continue.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Walsh', with a stylized, cursive script.

Michael Walsh  
Director-General  
Queensland Health