

CP/JS:ej

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Dear Dr Cooke

Thank you for providing AMA Queensland with the opportunity to provide input on the *Pain is everyone's business (mapping of persistent pain management services in Queensland)*. This is a very important issue for AMA Queensland, as the data seems to indicate successive Queensland governments have failed to address the overwhelming unmet need in pain management services, particularly as chronic pain affects one in five people at an estimated cost to the Queensland economy of close to \$30bn per year.

Overall, AMA Queensland is very pleased with the report and recommendations and the apparent transparency of data regarding the unmet need in all geographical areas and that Queensland Health has accepted all of the changes to pain management services recommended by AMA Queensland in our previous discussions with the department on this issue.

AMA Queensland provides comments about four areas:

1. The budget

AMA Queensland is concerned that the report did not contain a proposed budget to address the recommendations for such an important issue. AMA Queensland would suggest Queensland Health commit at least \$16m per annum to address this issue.

2. Pain management services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

One important strategic area which appears to be missing from the report is pain management services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. AMA Queensland understands that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are three times more likely to need pain management services, but that previous attempts by Queensland Health to address this issue have resulted in very few Aboriginal people being referred to pain management clinics.

AMA Queensland would recommend community led consultations between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples, local aboriginal services and service agencies including RFDS to explore the unmet need at the community level and the steps towards establishing culturally appropriate pain management services across the state.

3. Education for existing/future workforce

AMA Queensland would recommend some additional strategies be added to the report regarding how the management of pain is taught to the existing and future workforce, including doctors, nurses and allied health practitioners. AMA Queensland understands the majority of health workers in primary care and the public sector and private specialist sector have not been taught how to assess and manage people with chronic pain. This may be a contributing factor to the 'opioid crisis', particularly in sites without locally funded pain management services, which have trends towards higher rates of opioid prescribing and a greater proportion of overdose deaths.

AMA Queensland would recommend targeted training for both acute and consistent pain and the monitoring of medication misuse and dependency be included in the curriculum of medicine, nurse and allied health training courses as an additional action in this report.

4. Pain management services for children

AMA Queensland is pleased to see a section of the report dedicated to Paediatric Pain Services. AMA Queensland understands that although the occasions of service for paediatric pain services is low, the cost of assessing and managing pain in children costs the health system approximately four times the funding required than for adults. AMA Queensland would recommend Queensland Health undertake a much closer analysis of unmet need in this important target group, possible replication of emerging models such as that identified in the report at CHQ including an expansion in use of telehealth technologies to improve accessibility to specialised paediatric pain management and involvement of interdisciplinary teams.

Thank you again for providing AMA Queensland with the opportunity to provide feedback on this important issue.

Yours sincerely



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President
Australian Medical Association Queensland



Jane Schmitt
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Medical Association Queensland