

**Queensland State Committee
Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
Leckhampton Offices Level 2 59-69 Shafston Avenue
Kangaroo Point QLD Australia 4169**

11 December 2015

Research Director
Health and Ambulance Services Committee
Parliament House
Brisbane Qld 4000

RE: Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2015

Thank you for extending us the opportunity to comment on the draft Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2015.

As the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) is committed to taking informed and principled positions on issues of public health at both state and federal level.

This stakeholder engagement process is looking for comments on a number of areas; RACS will be restricting its response to the following areas:

- the *Food Act 2006* to require fast-food chains, snack-food and drinks chains, bakery chains, café chains, and supermarkets to display nutritional information, and to authorise disclosure of confidential information for limited public health and safety reasons
- the *Health Ombudsman Act 2013* and the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011* to enable the Minister to temporarily appoint persons to the public panel of assessors and Hospital and Health Boards respectively

The College's view is expressed in our position paper [Reducing the burden of Obesity Position Paper](#), enclosed here – in that document RACS believes a combination of preventative measures and an increase in the availability of treatment options for those who are already obese is the most effective way to address obesity. Evidence suggests that taking steps to maintain a healthy weight and lifestyle throughout life is one of the most important ways to protect against many types of cancer¹ and a range of other diseases.

The 2010 ACE-Prevention study funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council is described as, “the largest and most rigorous evaluation of preventative strategies undertaken anywhere in the world.” It found that a 10 per cent tax on unhealthy non-core foods would lead to substantial health gain and considerable future cost savings by averting treatment of obesity-related diseases.²

The WHO also recognises the influence of price on food choices and supports a fiscal approach.

Examples of other preventative measures include better labelling on food packaging and public education programs. There is evidence to suggest that education programs can have a positive impact on physical activity levels.^{3,4}



It is important that not just the improvements in food labelling occur but they are backed up by a widely disseminated educational program.

With respect to the proposed changes to the *Health Ombudsman Act 2013* and the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011* the College would give in principle support. The College would like to suggest the following:

- Those appointments should be for a period of no more than 12 months
- These temporary appointments should not be 'rolling 12 month' appointments. Once the initial 12 month period is exhausted a permanent appointee should have been arranged
- The appointment process to the public panel of assessors, in regard to the relevant RACS surgical disciplines, could be filtered through the College's Executive Director of Surgical Affairs (in the case of being a Queensland Fellow) or the Queensland Regional Office who would be able to provide advice and assistance.

On behalf of RACS, we again thank you for extending us with the opportunity to provide comment on this important area of public policy.

Yours Sincerely,

Owen Ung
Chair, Queensland State Committee

1. World Cancer Research Fund/American Institute for Cancer Research. Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity, and the Prevention of Cancer: a Global Perspective. Washington DC: AICR, 2007. From: http://www.dietandcancerreport.org/cancer_resource_center/downloads/Second_Expert_Report_full.pdf

2. Vos, T. et al. Assessing Cost-Effectiveness in Prevention (ACE-Prevention): Final Report. University of Queensland, Brisbane and Deakin University, Melbourne, 2010.

3. Woolcott Research. Research Report: Evaluation of the National 'Get Moving' Campaign. Prepared for the Department of Health and Ageing, January 2007.

4. McLeod, M. (2014) An evaluation of a facilitator-led 'Run & Walk' health promotion initiative targeting inactive adult males. Supported by Men's Health Trust New Zealand & Unitec Institute of Technology. From: <http://unitec.researchbank.ac.nz/handle/10652/2536>. Accessed 10 February 2015.