

Consultation Insights Summary

The Strategy

Health and Wellbeing Queensland has led the development of Making Healthy Happen 2023-2032 (the Strategy), a strategy for preventing obesity in Queensland, and will drive its implementation across government. The Strategy is the Queensland Government’s response to the National Obesity Strategy 2022-2032, released in March 2022.

The Making Healthy Happen Action Plan 2023-2026 (the Action Plan) is the first in a series of action plans and sets out the priorities and actions for the initial three years of the Strategy.

To ensure the Strategy and Action Plan reflects the voice of Queenslanders, Health and Wellbeing Queensland undertook three broad engagement rounds with:

- people with lived experience of obesity
- the health and community workforce in metropolitan, regional and rural Queensland
- government, non-government organisations, health and social sectors, universities, and industry stakeholders.

The Strategy and the Action Plan were also informed by:

- the National Obesity Strategy 2022-2032 and related evidence reviews
- a review of current cross-government policies and practices that make up Queensland’s obesity prevention ecosystem
- an evidence review of the emerging impacts of COVID-19 on population weight, physical activity, diet, and other obesity-related health outcomes.



Consultation

Results from across all stakeholder engagements that have informed the Strategy are provided in **Table 1** with a breakdown of the audience groups from the online surveys shown in **Figure 1**.

Initial engagement

The first public consultation undertaken across June and July 2022, explored the key priorities for Queenslanders around nutrition, physical activity, and weight. Queensland-based social researchers and engagement specialists, The Social Deck, supported Health and Wellbeing Queensland to directly engage with 221 stakeholders from government, community and health sectors, and industry through workshops and webinars. A community survey was also distributed and completed by 757 people. Consultation results were collated and independently analysed by The Social Deck to inform the drafting of the Strategy and the Action Plan.

Second phase of engagement

The second consultation period across October and November 2022 focused on validating and refining the approach taken in the draft Strategy and draft Action Plan. Stakeholders provided feedback on the overarching vision, goals, and ambitions of the draft Strategy, along with the activities outlined in the draft Action Plan. A targeted survey was completed by 177 individual community members and organisations, including 36 written responses that expanded on stakeholder feedback. Health and Wellbeing Queensland also directly engaged with 44 community members with lived experience of higher body weight through a series of workshops, and 101 stakeholders from government, community and health sectors, and industry through webinars.

Third phase of engagement

A series of focus groups were held in January 2023. This third round of consultation engaged with 40 regional Queenslanders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, younger adults aged 18-24 years, and males aged 25-75 years to further inform and finalise the development of the Strategy. The focus groups provided insight into the attitudes and perceptions of obesity among these priority groups. They also looked at language considerations to reduce weight stigma and communication requirements to improve outcomes for all.

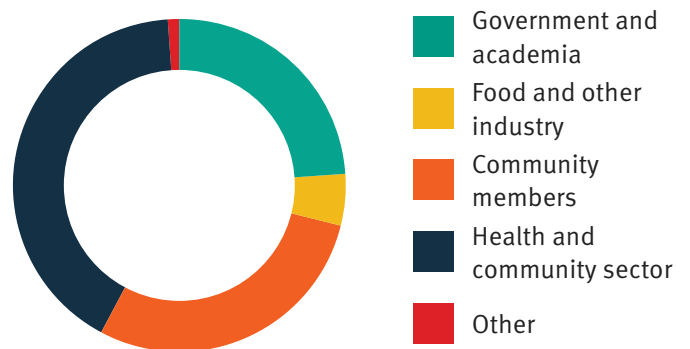
To further engage with Queenslanders, Health and Wellbeing Queensland developed a dedicated landing webpage, targeted social media ads, and a series of eNewsletters, delivered across the consultation period. Performance across social media and eNewsletters was strong, driving traffic to the webpage, increasing submissions to consultation surveys and registration to workshops.

Table 1: Engagement across the consultation period.

Activity	No. of activities	No. of participants
Workshops and focus groups	16	179
Webinars	3	183
Survey	2	934
Total	21	1,296
Webpage total views		3,671
Webpage unique views		2,608
Total social media reach [^]		90,760
Total social media impressions [^]		280,518
Click on social media links		2,408
eNewsletter contacts reached		1,333
eNewsletter open rate, average [*]		46%

[^]Reach is the total number of unique people who saw content; Impressions are the number of times content was visible to users.
^{*}The Australian average eNewsletter open rate is 20.6%.

Figure 1: Audience groups of those who provided feedback through the online surveys.



What Queenslanders said

We wanted to hear from Queenslanders about what was important to them, and where they would like to see more action over the next ten years.

Themes

During the first public consultation period, common themes included:

Address equity Need to tackle inequities around access to food, physical activity, and healthy environments at a systems level.	Demonstrate government leadership and collaboration All government levels and departments need to work together to take a leading role in influencing changes to pricing, marketing, and food and drink labelling.
Drive local and community-led solutions Focus on actions that drive local community-led, co-designed solutions and initiatives.	Educate and build capacity Educate and build capacity to improve health behaviours, with inclusive and positive messaging to help reduce weight stigma.

Feedback received through the second round of consultation was overwhelmingly positive and supportive of the Strategy and the Action Plan intent. The themes raised through the second round of consultation were consistent with the first, including equity, strategic alignment across government, and emphasising the importance of community-led solutions. Feedback highlighted the importance of supporting priority population groups, including women, children, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and those living in rural and remote regions of the state, particularly around the cost of living and access to healthcare.

Throughout this consultation, relevant government departments confirmed their leadership or support of key initiatives that will work to underpin the successful delivery of this cross-government strategy.

Respondents also provided insight into the following themes:

Reduce weight stigma Apply language that focuses on health rather than weight, incorporating the voice of those with lived experience of obesity.	Address wider determinants of health Ensure focus is not solely on the individual, but addresses the many interrelated causes of weight gain, which are often beyond the control of the individual.
Drive policy and legislation change Better use policy and legislation to support healthy behaviours, including encouraging the food and beverage industry to reassess product formulations, food labelling, taxing sugar-sweetened drinks and ultra-processed foods, and creating more stringent rules around marketing and promotion.	Increase access to supportive healthcare Support access (including virtual) to health professionals across the state with experience and knowledge in respectfully supporting individuals through their health concerns, particularly in regional and remote communities.
Support advocacy on obesity issues Empower community members to better advocate for themselves in the health system, and collectively advocate for policy and regulatory reform at neighbourhood and community levels.	Focus on accountability and transparency Provide greater specificity for actions that are high-level and vague and remove those that do not have a clear intention. Clarify mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation, implementation, and governance.

Further insights

Focus groups provided greater insight into the attitudes, perceptions and behaviours of Queenslanders regarding obesity. Findings from the focus groups suggest that individuals believe health is unique to each person and requires a personalised approach. Participants reported that while the environment and access to healthcare can impact health, it is ultimately the individual's responsibility to maintain healthy habits like diet and exercise. Many have tried structured programs for support, but success was found to be based on personal trial and error. Access to healthcare, especially primary care, was identified as a barrier to health. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, a connection to culture was deemed an important aspect of health. Participants generally avoided language related to weight, as it was perceived as judgmental, but accepted the use of the term "obesity" in a medical or research context.

Priorities for action

Through the engagement process Health and Wellbeing Queensland heard from Queensland communities, health professionals, and a range of stakeholders about their priorities and ideas for action.

These insights have helped us to shape the Strategy and the first Action Plan:



Ambition 1

Create supportive, sustainable and healthy environments

- Make healthy food more affordable. Many stakeholders identified actions to make unhealthy food comparatively less affordable.
- Make sustainable, healthy food and drinks more accessible. This included the importance of prioritising access to healthy food in schools, workplaces and other institutions as well as ensuring access for people in low socioeconomic, rural and remote communities. People recognised the importance of ensuring healthy foods are equitably distributed to different regions of Queensland.
- Reduce exposure to unhealthy food and drink marketing and promotion. Many stakeholders recognised the importance of increasing the marketing of healthy foods and drinks.
- Build more connected and safe community spaces. Participants recognised the relationship between good infrastructure and improved community participation activities. Stakeholders also recognised the unique opportunity that Queensland has to improve infrastructure in the lead-up to the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- Actions in school settings. Stakeholders particularly focused on the provision of healthy food in schools and the inclusion of more physical activity.
- Encourage people to participate in physical activity and sport. Participants particularly recognised the significance of cost as a barrier to increased participation.



Ambition 2

Empower people to stay healthy

- Participants recognised that improving children's healthy eating and exercise habits would result in ongoing benefits throughout their lives.
- Participants recognised the need to build awareness of and specifically address social determinants of health that contribute to obesity.
- Support local communities to lead their own solutions. There was a particular focus on funding and supporting more local community organisations, and local councils, to develop initiatives so they meet the needs of local communities.
- Education, which included building knowledge and skills. Participants focused on building community capacity to deliver programs and services.



Ambition 3

Enable access to prevention, early intervention and supportive healthcare

- Access to healthcare services was rated as a top priority for stakeholders and community members in the survey. Many participants put forward actions designed to assist with the affordability of access to healthcare services for obesity.
- Improved models of care were a priority for stakeholders. This included a focus on improving referral pathways, such as from general practitioners to allied health.
- Training and capacity building for the health workforce. Stakeholders and community members recognised the detrimental impact that weight stigma from health professionals can have on outcomes for people experiencing obesity.

Next steps

Outcomes from stakeholder engagement have been used to further shape the approach taken in Making Healthy Happen 2023-2032 and the Making Healthy Happen Action Plan 2023-2026.

Key themes identified through stakeholder consultation were used to inform development of a set of guiding principles, which serve to guide implementation at all levels of action:



Health and Wellbeing Queensland will continue to undertake consultation with key stakeholders, including community members, to ensure that the Strategy and actions remain practical, achievable, and responsive to the needs of the Queensland community.

For more information, email consultation@hw.qld.gov.au