Queensland Department of Education and Training response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the potential for developing opportunities for schools to become a focus for promoting healthy community living.

Developing opportunities for schools to become a focus for promoting healthy community living can be framed within:

1) Departmental Policies
2) Grants
3) Whole of Government initiatives
4) Health Promoting Schools.

**Departmental Policies**

Schools have an important role in promoting healthy eating and physical activity to students and providing an environment that supports a healthy lifestyle. The Department of Education and Training has developed a number of policies that have been instrumental in focusing schools on healthy living. These include:

**Smart Choices**

Tuckshops are an important part of the school environment as they can model healthy food and drink choices that are tasty, interesting and affordable, and provide the means to put into practice nutrition messages taught in the classroom.

*Smart Choices – Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Queensland Schools* was endorsed by Cabinet on 14 June 2005 and launched on 7 July 2005. *Smart Choices* became mandatory in all state schools from 1 January 2007.

*Smart Choices* is a joint initiative of Queensland Health and the Department of Education and Training and one of a number of initiatives under the Queensland Government’s *Eat Well, Be Active – Healthy Kids for Life Action Plan* to reduce the incidence of obesity in school aged children and young people.

*Smart Choices* is based on the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents* in Australia developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (2003).

*Smart Choices* contains a food and drink spectrum to guide choices for schools (including tuckshop convenors) and categorises food and drinks as GREEN, AMBER and RED:

- **GREEN** – ‘have plenty’ encourage and promote these foods and drinks in the school.
- **AMBER** – ‘select carefully’ do not let these foods and drinks dominate choices and avoid large service sizes.
- **RED** – ‘occasional’, limit the availability of these foods and drinks to no more than two occasions per term.

The strategy is supported by teaching programs that help children make decisions to eat healthy food more regularly and eat less junk food. The program encourages students to think about their health and to change unhealthy behaviours.
**Smart Moves**

*Smart Moves – Physical Activity Programs in Queensland State Schools* promotes the health and wellbeing of Queensland’s young people through increasing the curriculum time in which students are engaged in physical activity, and improving the quality of that activity.

Education Queensland schools began planning for the implementation of *Smart Moves* in July 2008, with full implementation in December 2008.

*Smart Moves* mandates the amount of curriculum time in which students must engage in physical activity:

- **Primary Schools** – all state primary schools must allocate 30 minutes per day of physical activity of at least moderate intensity as part of the school curriculum.
- **Secondary Schools** – all state secondary schools are required to provide at least two hours of physical activity at moderate intensity in curriculum time for lower secondary students each school week.
- **Special Schools** – all special schools must allocate curriculum time for physical activity that is the same or as close as possible to the required time allocation for primary and secondary schools.

Smart Moves also advocate for improved partnerships with the community and sporting organisations to foster and strengthen opportunities for children and young people to participate in physical activities.

**Grants**

There are a number of grants for which schools and communities can apply.

**Eat Well Be Active Community Partnerships Program**

The Eat Well Be Active Community Partnerships Program is co-funded by the Department of Communities (Sport and Recreation), Queensland Health and the Department of Education and Training. The program provided funding of $3.0 million in Round 1 2007, $3.5 million in Round 2 2009 with $3.5 million available in Round 3. Funding supports innovative and sustainable projects aimed at increasing participation in physical activity and improving eating patterns.

The key objectives of this Program are to:

- provide sustainable opportunities for Queenslanders to lead active lifestyles and adopt healthy eating patterns;
- encourage new approaches in communities to the development and delivery of physical activity and healthy eating initiatives;
- enhance and build on successful physical activity and healthy eating initiatives; and
- encourage collaboration between State and local government, schools and community organisations.

To be eligible for funding under this Program, applicants are required to form partnerships within the community. The project must have the primary purpose of increasing participation in physical activity and/or improving healthy eating habits in Queensland.

Projects submitted under this Program which incorporate a healthy eating component will need to be based on best practice and evidence and be consistent with:
• the National Health and Medical Research Council Dietary Guidelines for Australian Adults and Older Australians; and
• The National Health and Medical Research Council Dietary Recommendations for Children and Adolescents.

Healthy Queensland Awards Program

The Healthy Queensland Awards Program are about Queenslanders working together to make their communities, schools and workplaces healthier. Keep Australia Beautiful partners with the Queensland Government through the Department of Communities (Sport and Recreation), Department of Education and Training and Department of Justice and the Attorney General (Workplace Health and Safety Queensland) on this initiative.

The Awards aim to make Queenslanders Australia’s healthiest people by:
• motivating communities, workplaces and schools to work together to create healthier places for Queenslanders to live, work, learn and play
• celebrating the commitment of communities, workplaces and schools across Queensland in helping make Queenslanders Australia’s healthiest people
• rewarding communities, workplaces and schools for healthy living initiatives that help Queenslanders be more physically active, make healthier food choices, achieve and maintain a healthy weight, be smoke free, encourage responsible drinking and be sun smart
• supporting the continuation and enhancement of outstanding initiatives in communities, schools and workplaces to stem the devastating tide of preventable disease in Queensland.

Entrants may include streets, community groups, clubs and associations, neighbourhood centres, local government, schools, small businesses, charities and corporations. Prize money for Award winners is in the form of funding for community, school and workplace ‘healthy infrastructure’.

Winners share a prize totalling $1 million for communities, $500,000 for schools and $100,000 for workplaces.

Green and Healthy Schools Awards Program

Since 1999, Keep Australia Beautiful Queensland (KABQ) has managed the Green and Healthy Schools (GHS) program to encourage schools to develop a green and healthy philosophy and to tackle a range of environmental sustainability issues at the school level, including nutrition, waste minimisation, energy efficiency, litter reduction, water conservation and biodiversity improvement of school grounds.

KABQ, through its GHS program, is a foundation core member and key stakeholder in the Queensland Environmentally Sustainable Schools Initiative (QESSI) Alliance, which is aimed at assisting schools to become more environmentally sustainable. The green and healthy whole of school approach to sustainability was a forerunner to the QESSI concept.

Keep Australia Beautiful Queensland assessors take into account every school’s geographic, environmental, cultural and economic circumstances, and assess how efficiently and effectively the school community uses the resources available to it against a range of criteria, including environmental protection, litter prevention, resource management, youth initiatives, health, nutrition and fitness, partnerships and school spirit.

Green and Healthy Schools operates throughout the school year and features a competition.
that culminates in Regional Awards followed by the State Awards at Parliament House in October.

Award categories include:

- Environmental Protection – protecting and managing the environment
- Low Carbon School – achieving qualitative and quantitative measures to reduce carbon emissions
- Partnerships – partnering to motivate, educate, involve and enhance the school community
- Resource Recovery – conservation of natural resources, through recovery, reuse and appropriate waste management
- School Spirit – commitment to solving problems faced during difficult times
- Fit and Active – commitment to healthy outcomes for students through the promotion of physical activity and an active lifestyle
- Waterwise – outstanding accomplishment in conserving water and being WaterWise
- Health and Nutrition – outstanding accomplishment in the promotion and enhancement of healthy food choices
- Litter Prevention – litter management and abatement within the school community
- Outstanding Achievement – outstanding contribution by an individual or group to the school community
- Young Legends – demonstrated accomplishment in youth initiated or led activities
- Thinking Caps – creatively capturing your school in Q150 and the Year of Creativity, 2009

In 2008, 590 Queensland schools participated in the Awards.

**The Green and Healthy Schools Young Legends Award**

The Green and Healthy Schools program encourages schools and their communities to develop a green and healthy philosophy and to tackle a range of issues including nutrition, waste minimisation, energy usage, litter management and recycling.

As well as the overall title of Greenest and Healthiest School, there are 11 Outstanding Accomplishment Awards including the Minister for Education’s Young Legends Award which recognises outstanding accomplishment in activities initiated and/or implemented by students.

**Local Government Awards**

These awards recognise Australian local government success in supporting heart healthy communities. Local government programs that build a sense of community, encourage people to be active, be smoke free, and make healthy food choices are encouraged to enter. Initiatives that are underpinned by plans and policies will be judged more favourably.

In 2009 there are six categories:

- Employee Health and Wellbeing - local governments that improve their employees heart health through introducing physical activity, healthy eating or smoke free initiatives in the workplace. Well planned and implemented initiatives can improve the health of employees resulting in improved productivity and morale.
• Facilities - local governments that develop and implement initiatives that encourage the use of their facilities to improve heart health.

• Healthy Weight - local governments that are running initiatives to address the increasing levels of overweight and obesity. Initiatives that contain both physical activity and healthy eating activities are recommended however, those focusing on either physical activity or healthy eating will also be considered. Physical activity and healthy eating initiatives that are long term and sustainable will be judged more favourably than those focusing on short term weight loss.

• Planning for Active Living - local governments that encourage active living through urban planning initiatives.

• Priority Groups - local governments that develop and implement initiatives in collaboration with the community to improve the heart health of priority groups. Key priority groups for heart disease include: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from low socio-economic areas and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, groups from rural areas, socially isolated individuals, the older population, overweight individuals and people with risk factors for heart disease.

• Tobacco - local governments that improve their community’s heart health through reducing exposure to environmental tobacco smoke and providing assistance to help them quit smoking.

The Awards provide an opportunity for Local Governments to celebrate their achievements and receive recognition for their commitment to creating healthier communities.

The Heart Foundation provide plaques, certificates and $34,000 in awards to local governments who provide programs that support and improve heart health in each of the six categories at national and state/territory levels.

**Whole of Government initiatives**

The Queensland government has framed its *Toward Q2: Tomorrow’s Queensland 2020* vision for Queensland around five ambitions that address future challenges.

The five ambitions are:

1) Strong – creating a diverse economy powered by bright ideas
2) Green – protecting our lifestyle and environment
3) Smart – delivering world-class education
4) Healthy – making Queenslanders Australia’s healthiest people
5) Fair – supporting safe and caring communities

One of the targets of the healthy ambition is to reduce by one-third obesity, smoking, heavy drinking and unsafe sun exposure. This target presents opportunities for schools and their communities to become a focus for promoting healthy living.

Strong partnerships exist between the Department of Education and Training, Queensland Health, Department of Communities (Sport and Recreation), Office for Early Childhood Education and Care, and the Department of Transport and Main Roads to work across initiatives to reach the 2020 targets. Cross Government initiatives recognise the shared responsibility that organisations are taking towards meeting the 2020 health targets.
A broad range of cross government initiatives and partner projects exist to support schools to promote healthy living. Departmental involvement includes:

- **Department of Education and Training and Queensland Health** – increase consideration of physical activity, healthy eating and healthy weight in planning initiatives across government.
- **Department of Education and Training and the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care** – embedding support for healthy promoting behaviours in environments catering for children in the early years.
- **Department of Transport and Main Roads and Department of Education and Training** – increase the number of schools developing and implementing School Travel Plans.
- **Department of Education and Training and Department of Communities (Sport and Recreation)** – open school physical activity and sporting facilities in Queensland State Schools to the Queensland Community.
- **Department of Communities (Sport and Recreation), Department of Education and Training and Queensland Health** – integrated social marketing campaign to encourage adults and children to be active to the levels prescribed by the National Physical Activity Guidelines.
- **Whole of Government partners** – develop a consistent, best-practice, whole of government approach to sun safety.

To support the whole of government initiatives the Department of Education and Training provides a range of professional opportunities to build the capacity of teachers in the areas of nutrition education, drug education and sun safety.

**Health Promoting Schools**

Health Promoting Schools are an initiative of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and offers a whole of school framework in which healthy community living can be achieved.

A health promoting school can be characterised as a school constantly strengthening its capacity as a healthy setting for living, learning and working. This approach facilitates change using a combination of democratic and collaborative strategies. These strategies are used to develop and implement a health curriculum that is appropriate to the needs of the school community, and is supported and extended through the everyday organisation and practices of the school.

A Health Promoting School is one which systematically and deliberately sets out to improve and protect the health and well-being of the school community (including students, all staff, parents, volunteers and interested community members and organisations). It is achieved by members of the school community working together towards an integrated approach of:

- curriculum and teaching
- school organisation, ethos and environment
- school partnerships and services.

Individual schools, in consultation with their community, make decisions regarding the adoption of the Healthy Promoting Schools framework.