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# Better beginnings for our children and our future

It's a critical time in a child's life – the 2,000 days between conception and the start of primary school are vital for a child's development physically, mentally and socially.

The research is clear that a child's experience during this time has long lasting effects on their health outcomes throughout life. Investment in the early years will make a big difference in the lives of children and adults, and also to the sustainability of the health system in the longer term.

There are so many factors that can impact those experiences, ranging from parental health, pregnancy and post-partum factors, access to vaccines and nutritious food, education, and loving and safe relationships and environments.

We want families and children to thrive, not just survive. But for this to happen the right care and support needs to be easily accessible when and where it's needed.

In November this year, the Queensland Clinical Senate members and guests will turn their attention to identifying the areas that will have the most impact on longer-term health outcomes, to guide clinicians, system leaders and policy makers, with a particular focus on prevention.

There is certainly no one answer here, as there is no one 'problem'.

The work our clinicians do at this meeting will build on our *Growing Deadly Families* meeting from 2017, at which we looked at a healthy start to life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. So much great work is already underway in this space and we're excited to expand on that.

It will also expand on our recent work around *Reimagining Healthcare* and areas of real reform that are needed. At a time when the Queensland health system is focused on reform and making our system more responsive to the needs of consumers, this is the right time to be having this conversation. We owe it to our future generations.

In my last *Doctor Q* column, I wrote about the Senate's *Reimagining Healthcare* meeting series and the need for major reform now if our health system is to be sustainable.

One of the key conclusions to come from this meeting was the importance of tertiary healthcare integrating with primary and community care. Care doesn't begin on admission any more than it ends when a patient is discharged from hospital. We all know this, yet our system doesn't reflect it. It is so exciting to see the mindset shift within our healthcare system to becoming a system that recognises the continuous nature of care provision inside and outside of our hospital walls.

You can read the full list of recommendations and the meeting report on our website [clinicalexcellence.qld.gov.au/priority-areas/clinician-engagement/queensland-clinical-senate/meetings](https://clinicalexcellence.qld.gov.au/priority-areas/clinician-engagement/queensland-clinical-senate/meetings)

