

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Community Support and Services Committee](#)
Subject: Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022
Date: Thursday, 3 March 2022 3:44:29 PM

To whom it may concern

Kindly accept this submission, in relation to the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022.

I wish to object to the extension of the emergency powers.

The powers provided by the COVID Emergency Response legislation should not continue for any longer than is absolutely necessary, and it can be argued have been in place for too long now, based on a whole range of evidence, not the least the evidence provided by the recent outbreaks on mortality, and the availability of a range of vaccines and other treatments. There is no longer an emergency in Queensland and we need to now treat COVID-19 as a seasonal virus.

The threat posed from COVID-19 has been grossly overstated, and this is even more evident with recent variants. The recent outbreak in Queensland did not result in a noticeable increase in mortality, death rates have not spiked, and are certainly no higher than any flu season. The evidence from here and abroad still seems to be clear that the impact of this virus is very low. Recently in the UK the IFR was estimated to be around 0.1% or even lower, which is at or even less than the flu.

Historic statistics for causes of deaths in Australia show that every year thousands die from respiratory diseases. But this fact was not used to justify large scale civil liberties restrictions or emergency declarations. Whilst you can argue that initially it was thought that COVID-19 was more harmful and deadly than the flu, recent statistics have not proven it to be substantially different, and hence, this must lead to a more proportionate response, which means the end of large restrictions on the fundamental rights of Queenslanders.

Some claim that these measures are justified by a concept known as the precautionary principle. However, this principle conflicts with individual liberty. It puts undue pressure on officials to take steps and react on a daily or even hourly basis to sentiment rather than facts. Even in the absence of clear evidence, emergency powers give permission for arbitrary decisions. Rather than balancing risk against liberty, the effect of this principle is that liberty is what you have left after all possible precautions have been taken. In effect it sets the value of liberty at naught. Importantly it doesn't take into account peoples differences and risk profiles. This is not how we deal with risk in our lives.

The precautionary principle is a long-winded way of saying "better safe than sorry". Better safe than sorry is not the standard for dealing with fundamental rights, but is the motto of a police state. It would follow from better safe than sorry that all of us ought to be surveilled at all times so that nobody could commit a crime. It would suggest that we don't partake in many daily activities that are the norm for our population. And it puts the decision making in the power of one unelected government officer to make decisions for all 6 million citizens of Queensland, when one person cannot know everything about everyone.

The virus is not going to disappear any time soon and is now set to become seasonal like colds and flus do. Having been through a full outbreak, Queenslanders can see that we can deal with this virus without the draconian restrictions. We can now cope with this virus in the way we cope with the flu, which dictates that the emergency measures which have been implemented to deal with it must also come to an end.

There is no emergency so please do not extend these powers.

Kind regards

David Smith

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

