

4th March 2022

Carolyn Argent
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RE: Public Health and Other Legislation
(Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill

Dear Committee Secretary,

I am writing to reject the Minister for Health's Public Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022.

I DO NOT SUPPORT extending the Public Health Act 2005 to increase powers for emergency officers and the Chief Health Officer in Queensland.

I DO NOT SUPPORT amendments to the Corrective Services Act 2006, Disaster Management Act 2003 and Mental Health Act 2016 to support the extension of the public health response.

I DO NOT SUPPORT the continuation of a head of power in the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020 to make regulations to facilitate transitional arrangements for the temporary framework.

Annastacia Palaszczuk has referred to the Doherty Institute modelling predictions, that even with 70% of the population vaccinated, 80 people will die each day six months after the outbreak (2240 a month). This grossly overestimates the severity of this virus and while these models and forecasts supported the early implementation of public health emergency measures, the latest certified data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics clearly indicates that the figures for COVID-19 fatalities DO NOT warrant the continuation of the current public emergency health measures.

- Between March 2020 until the end of January 2022, ABS identified 273 901 Australians died. **0.9% had COVID**. Compared to other diseases causing death, COVID should not be causing such alarm.
- 2 639 people died **with** or **from** COVID (Compare this to the average annual number of deaths due to influenza and pneumonia between 2015 and 2019 which was 2 908).
- The majority of COVID deaths, **92%**, had other underlying health issues. An average of roughly 3 diseases or conditions per person. 35% of those people had a chronic heart issue. This proves that COVID is not dangerous for healthy people.
- There were 83 people who died **of** COVID.

Government and media reports suggest that:

- Anyone entering hospital with COVID, despite not being in hospital because of COVID, have been recorded as a COVID statistic.
- COVID numbers are inclusive of anyone who has recently had COVID prior to entering hospital, even if they had recovered.
- Case numbers in schools have not increased at the expected rate.

These inclusions in hospitalisations, overinflate and overestimate the impact COVID is having on our health and on our hospitals. Our hospitals are NOT overrun with COVID cases, if anything, they are suffering staff shortages due to mandates which have been placed by the CHO under his emergency powers. This supports the lifting of the emergency powers, in fact demonstrates that the decisions made by the CHO may be detrimental to the safety and wellbeing of the population.

Are We at Risk of Serious Complications and Death?

According to health.gov.au, as of 3rd March 2022:

- 2 892 325 people have had COVID. According to the Queensland Chief Health Officer, this number is likely much higher due to people who are symptomatic and asymptomatic not being tested.
- Of these, 5272 have died **with** COVID. (As above 92% of these had underlying health issues – COVID mostly was not the primary cause of death, also includes those who tested positive for COVID in the weeks before dying).
- This is less than 0.2% at worst, and likely much lower due to the factors above.

The large majority of people who are infected with COVID 19, are not at risk of serious complications and death. This current data does not support the extension of the emergency health powers.

Is the Pandemic Over?

The WHO states that to achieve herd immunity against COVID 19 “a substantial proportion of the population would need to be vaccinated”. The premier has stated many times that 90% vaccination is the target for Queenslanders to be vaccinated. With over 90% of the population vaccinated and protected from serious illness, Qld Health data is showing a reduction in cases.

After conducting random antibody trials, the Qld Chief Health Officer has stated that by the end of February, it is likely that over 50% of the population will have been infected with COVID 19 (many without even knowing it). High vaccination rates, combined with natural immunity, according to WHO, will provide sufficient protection for our population, seeing the situation move from pandemic to endemic.

Effects on the Community

Under the powers given to him, the Chief Health Officer (an unelected representative), along with our government, has made decisions with a focus on preventing the spread of COVID 19, but with little acknowledgement of the impact these decisions are having on the broader community.

- Mental Health services are overwhelmed
- hospitals, schools, paramedics, businesses are all suffering staff shortages due to vaccination mandates. Our hospitals and schools would be in a much better position if all their staff were allowed to work.
- healthy, highly experienced and skilled professionals are waiting for mandates to be lifted instead of doing what they do best. They are ready, willing and able to work!
- people are losing their jobs, therefore struggling emotionally and financially
- businesses are spending funds on implementing mandates (even though vaccines do not stop transmission)
- communities are being segregated, divided and marginalised

Queenslanders are suffering! The cost to our communities caused by these decisions, are far greater reaching than the virus itself.

The pandemic stage of this virus is over. Data and evidence shows that numbers are reducing and people are safe from serious illness. Mandates introduced under the emergency powers are no longer working or necessary. It's time to focus resources on protecting the vulnerable and letting everyone else get back to normality - end mandates, lock downs, border closures and mask wearing.

Government policies should be based on data and evidence, not fear and emotion. The evidence is clear which is why I STRONGLY BELIEVE this Bill SHOULD NOT be extended past 30 April 2022, and the Minister for Health must end the declared public health emergency now.

Yours sincerely,

Carolyn Argent