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**SUMBISSION TO:**

**PUBLIC HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION (EXTENSION OF EXPIRING PROVISIONS) AMENDMENT BILL 2022**

**REFERENCE:** Explanatory Notes - <https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/tp/2022/5722T166-3D77.pdf>

I make a private submission to the above amendment Bill in relation using the 'Explanatory Notes' as the Bill itself does not provide the detail to respond to.

**PREFACE – REQUEST- TO DEFER THE SUBMISSION DATE FOR THIS BILL TO MID APRIL.**

I believe that the dates for the introduction of the bill to Parliament and submission closure is extremely disadvantageous to the residents of Queensland due to the current unprecedented flooding disaster or 'Weather Bomb' as the Premier is calling it and current recovery efforts, which has affected a significant part of the city of Brisbane and South East Queensland.

At this time of disaster, which is striking a significant population of Queensland, the last thing that people are aware of or unable to make submissions to, is a Parliamentary Bill. There has been no public awareness due to extensive media coverage of the Queensland (and NSW) flooding disaster.

Progressing the consideration of this bill without sufficient public awareness could be seen as the Queensland Labour Government taking advantage of Queenslanders at their lowest time while they are still either under water, impacted by floods or trying to recover their homes and businesses.

This can be seen as the Government purposefully subverting process that is fair to the people of Queensland, particularly when they are either physically unable to contribute even if they wanted to.

**GENERAL POSITION**

The Australian Federal government and many Australian State Governments have identified since 2021 and particularly since the onset of less severe variants such as Omricon, that Australians will have to learn to live with the 'endemic' and get on with their lives without the imposition of mandates. (Refer Prime Minister as well).

The description in the Explanatory Notes identifies the ongoing level of health threat for April to October 2022 the same as for the previous 12 months – 1 year ago – in its approach. Since (and during) 2021 there has been significant epidemiological information worldwide, which identifies that significant social and economic restrictive mandates that the Queensland Government is still currently enforcing, are not assisting in restricting the spread or severity of variants such as Omricon.

- Double vaccinated and boosted people are at the same level of risk of catching and/or spreading COVID-19
- Depending on co-morbidities, 'suitably' vaccinated people are just as vulnerable regardless of vaccination status.

- Masks have been recognised around the world now as non-effective in restricting the spread of COVID-19. Multiple countries are now acting on this medical advice and not mandating the wearing of them.
- People movement/restrictions – to restrict movement of people is detrimental to personal mental health as well as Queensland’s economic situation with large numbers of business closing and excessive numbers of jobs lost.
- Victimisation – by the police force for people not adhering to questionably legal mandates. This must stop for the benefit of Queensland people

## RESPONSES TO VARIOUS SECTIONS – BRIEF

*Although this high [vaccination] coverage provides protections, the risk of adverse impacts to the health system, economy and the community remains, as demonstrated recently by the high rate of transmission occurring from the Omicron variant (Omicron).* (Page 1 Explanatory Notes, Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022

*“A rapid and flexible public health response is still required to protect the health, safety and welfare of Queenslanders and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the community. Ongoing COVID-19 responses are likely to be driven by local epidemiological conditions, vaccination rates and health system capacity, as well as any measures needed to respond to the emergence of vaccine resistant variants or other unforeseen circumstances.”* (Page 2,3 Explanatory Notes, Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022

**COMMENT:** The government simply can not rely on ‘other unforeseen circumstances’ to validate its proposed extension of the alleged ‘pandemic’ or ‘COVID-10 emergency’ status in Queensland. It is evident in the paper that the Queensland Government intends to continue to vilify and demonise those of its residents that have, for whatever reason, chosen not to be vaccinated by imposing the equivalent of vaccination passports. If this government overreach continues past a necessary period (ie End April 2022), it could very well be considered as a social engineering exercise by the government. The continued division of our society due to medical status is against a an internationally recognised moral code one would expect of an Australian State Government elected by the people. The economic damage to Queensland simply cannot withstand another 6 months of similar mandates against its businesses and people.

**Extension of expiring public health provisions** (Page 3,4 Explanatory Notes, Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022

*In particular, the Bill will extend all temporary amendments to the Public Health Act, including to:*

- *increase powers for emergency officers and the Chief Health Officer to limit, or respond to, the spread of COVID-19 in Queensland, including by issuing directions to require physical distancing, restrict movement and gatherings, require people to quarantine or self isolate and implement other containment measures;*
- *authorise the sharing of confidential information for contact tracing;*

- encourage compliance with quarantine requirements and other public health directions by providing appropriate penalties for contraventions;
- increase the period for which a regulation may extend a declared public health emergency from seven to 90 days;
- enable fees to be charged for costs associated with the mandatory quarantine of persons in government-arranged accommodation; and
- protect personal information collected for contact tracing.

Extending the temporary legislative framework in the Public Health Act until the COVID-19 public health legislation expiry day will ensure the Chief Health Officer can continue to apply any of the existing public health measures that may be necessary beyond 30 April 2022. **T** **s** **may include measures in response to new variants that emerge** and management of health system capacity.

**COMMENT: Again – this is establishing legislation that is based on the possibility of ‘new variants that emerge’. This is not a legitimate basis for legislating mandates and restrictions on the population of Queensland. It is accepted across the world by COVID-10 experts and Governments alike that COVID-19 variants are less dangerous to people’s health and that vaccinations, masks and movement restrictions are not a suitable or effective method of dealing with the virus. That the amendment supports actions for ‘unforeseen circumstances’ is serious overreach of Government actions in people’s lives and economic confidence in Queensland for a possibility of something occurring – as opposed to responding to an actual and existing threat.**

**Disaster Management Act 2003** (Page 5 Explanatory Notes, Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022

*The Disaster Management Act provides for a range of powers (declared disaster powers) that may be exercised for a disaster situation by persons authorised under the Act, including police officers. The declared disaster powers, which include the power to close a road to traffic, have been used throughout the pandemic where necessary to operationalise the Government’s response to the COVID-19 emergency.*

*Accordingly, the Bill extends the expiry of part 12A of the Disaster Management Act to:*

- **( 1)** *provide that the declared COVID-19 disaster situation may be extended by regulation for up to 90 days, instead of 14 days as is ordinarily required by the Act to provide greater certainty about disaster arrangements in relation to the COVID-19 emergency (section 138); and*
- **( 2)** *set aside the entitlement to compensation for loss or damage suffered as a result of the exercise of powers under the Disaster Management Act related to the COVID-19 disaster situation (section 138A).*

*The Bill extends these amendments until the COVID-19 public health legislation expiry day.*

**COMENT: Point #1 Query the legitimate basis for the extension from 14 to 90 days for the ‘declared COVID-19 disaster situation’ extended by regulation? We are now in a (generally agreed by Australian political leaders) endemic situation not a ‘disaster’ situation – therefore not legitimizing this proposed amendment. The Queensland Government cannot continue to legislate on the basis of ‘possibilities’**

**of something happening in the future. This would and will lead to ever increasing mandated restrictions on living and business in Queensland that the people are now past tolerating.**

**COMMENT: Point #2 – It is unacceptable for the Queensland Government to propose setting aside entitlement to compensation for loss of damage suffered as a result of exercising the powers granted in this proposed extended bill. If they are granting themselves power to implement the same level of mandates and actions that impact people and business – then they should be willing to continue to compensate to the same level of their impositions on the same. This is actually saying – we are extending our same powers but we will not be recognizing the need to compensate for the ongoing impacts to individuals and businesses regardless. This is not good enough!  
Drop the mandates and restrictions and then you can drop the compensation.**

**This is a brief and somewhat rushed submission due to lack of promotion by the State Government during a time of crisis and disaster in Queensland (March Floods).**

**Janet Watt  
10:50am Friday 0.03.22**