

Date: 3rd March 2022

SUBMISSION

Committee Secretary

Community Support and Services Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Re: Submission to extend the expiring provisions of the Public Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 to October 2022.

I write to voice my strong objection and opposition to the extension of all parts of these said emergency powers under which Queensland has lived for more than 2 years on the following grounds.

These powers have resulted in infringements on human dignity, human rights and most importantly our freedom. Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states “human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedom are to be fully respected (and the) interests and welfare of the individual should have priority over the sole interest of science or society.”

The actions imposed by the State Government on the people of Queensland would be considered illegal if these emergency powers and the ability to extend them, did not exist. The original Public Health Act 2005 only allowed for a maximum of 7 days. This has been grossly extended by evidence that has now been refuted by the current ABS data. To expect the Queensland people to accept this extension for 6 months without justifying it by empirical evidence, sound health advice and a detailed risk-benefit analysis in support of the continuation is not in the interest of the common good of the people. If these powers are extended, this justifiable data needs to be made available for public scrutiny.

The Queensland people have repeatedly been told by the Premier, CHO, and the media that:

- a. Covid cases, hospitalisation and deaths are falling.
- b. The current variant - Omicron, whilst infectious is not as serious/deadly as previous variants. “More like the flu”.
- c. ABS data now shows that figures quoted to support this Emergency Response are highly exaggerated.
- d. More people have died from the flu than Covid.

Since 7th February, check-in at businesses and venues where vaccinated statuses do not apply is no longer required. Restrictions are further easing as of 6pm 4th March. Masks will only be required in healthcare settings, residential age care, disability accommodation, prisons, public transport, airports, and planes. There will be no limits on numbers in your home, venues, and events.

Qld Government website (3rd March 2022) states that 90.9% of eligible Queenslanders are fully vaccinated. Our borders are open nationally and internationally. The Health Minister must declare an end to the public health emergency as soon as possible and outline the specific conditions that justify this declaration and its continued enforcement. We have seen a drastic improvement of the health risks presented by the original Covid-19 emergency and other countries lifting restrictions and treating Covid-19 as an endemic disease.

Furthermore, the definition of 'Covid-19 emergency' as declared by the Health Minister under section 315 of Public Health Act 2005, needs to be reviewed and more appropriately defined as to not allow the abuse of emergency powers. These powers should only be invoked in severe and essential circumstances, which arguably the current Covid-19 situation in Queensland does not meet.

I ask that the committee request and review the scientific literature and supporting evidence that the Health Minister is relying on to justify this 6 month extension and what specific conditions in Queensland would satisfy a declaration of the end of the 'Covid-19 emergency' as defined by the Public Health Act 2005. The public release of this evidence is vital to show government transparency and to safeguard against potential abuse of the emergency power under the Public Health Act 2005.

Regards

Jacinta Twidale

[REDACTED]

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Email: [REDACTED]