

From: [Louise Henricksen](#)
To: [Community Support and Services Committee](#)
Subject: Stop an extension of Emergency Provisions
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The State of Emergency (SOE) has devastated our economy and small business putting thousands out of work and forcing many more thousands to undergo medical procedures against their will in order to keep their jobs. Emergency powers have been in place for 2 years and we now need to learn to live with the virus like many other countries across the world.

The threat of COVID-19 has significantly subsided with the rise of the Omicron variant, this has been iterated numerous times by the Qld Chief Health Officer where he's stated Omicron may be more transmissible but it is far, far less severe in terms of symptoms, hospitalisations and fatalities.

Tasmania recently dropped vaccine mandates where Premier Peter Gutwein stated "The omicron virus is far milder, and hospitalisations remain steady and far lower than anticipated".

The CEO of the Gold Coast City council, Tim Baker, told his staff (in relation to not implementing a vaccine mandate) that key changes to the pandemic included:

- The Omicron variant wave has now passed its peak
- The Omicron variant is currently the dominant strain, and for most people, it results in flu like symptoms where non-prescription pain killers and other first aid measures are applied
- Gold Coast vaccination rates are high, with 87.9% of adults now double dosed*, and data indicating that the risk of severe illness is greatly reduced in people who are vaccinated.
- Federal and State governments have announced key changes to public health and social measures, including reducing mask wearing and allowing in fully vaccinated travellers

It's important to note that Queensland's vaccination rate is 90.9% as of 2 March 2022.

Mr Baker goes on to say that when the risk assessment was done in December 2021, the risks of COVID-19 was much higher due to lower vaccination rates and the Delta variant being the dominate strain.

This sentiment was iterated by the Commissioner of QFES when he decided not to implement a vaccine mandate citing Qld Health advice that there's now a downward trend of active cases across Queensland and a reduced risk of community transmission.

Former Deputy Chief Health Officer Dr Nick Coatsworth told radio station 6PR that low hospitalisation numbers made Omicron comparable to, and in some cases even less serious than, the flu.

There's a plethora of other evidence, precedents and scientific studies. The pandemic is clearly not what it was when emergency powers were extended on 2 December 2021. At that time borders were still closed and the expectation was a significant rise in cases when the borders re-opened, which did happen, due to fully vaccinated travellers coming into Qld. Now we have International travellers arriving.

However, three months on and we are now dealing with the Omicron variant, not Delta and we have past the Omicron peak. It's time to set Queenslanders free once again. We've

done it tough and served our communities well over the last 2 years. Not to mention the stress, anxiety, financial problems each person is going through in order to keep their jobs. It's time to reward the people for their service in fighting this pandemic and give them some certainty going forward. We didn't enter a SOE in 2017 or 2019 when flu deaths totalled over 260 for each of those years. So with Omicron being on par, or less severe than the flu, and cases on the decline, there's certainly no need to continue the SOE now.



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