

From: [Vicki Martin](#)
To: [Community Support and Services Committee](#)
Subject: Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022
Date: Friday, 4 March 2022 11:46:13 AM

ATTENTION: The Committee Secretary, Community Support and Services Committee

I am writing to express my opposition to the Queensland Health and Ambulance Services Minister's proposal to extend the COVID Emergency provisions until October 31, 2022.

By their very nature, these provisions are supposed to be for dealing with an emergency situation. While it can be argued that at the beginning of the pandemic the lack of knowledge and understanding of SARS CoV2 did in fact constitute an emergency situation, that no longer holds true. The reality is, the only emergency facing Queensland currently is the extensive flooding that has beset so many of our communities.

In determining if these provisions should be extended, the only real question is whether there is an "Emergency" warranting such broad-reaching powers that the Minister admits (in her Statement of Compatibility) restrict multiple human rights. The following points clearly show that there is no emergency and further restrictions of human rights in Queensland are not warranted:

- The Premier and Chief Health Officer, during a media conference in January 2022, admitted that the modelling for the opening of borders and subsequent spread of Omicron was grossly overstated, with far fewer hospitalisations, serious illness and death than anticipated. The current situation is that hospitalisations and cases are continuing to trend down and there has been no catastrophic impact on our health system.
- Based on this incorrect modelling the CHO used his emergency powers (the same powers this bill seeks to extend) to restrict the human rights of many citizens in Queensland - myself included - by banning any unvaccinated persons from taking part in any normal societal activities other than visiting a supermarket.
- The impact of this restriction of human rights on me, my family and friends in a similar situation has been catastrophic with many of us battling depression and anxiety as a result of now being ostracised in our communities. We have been turned into criminals for wanting to grab a beer with mates, or go to a theatre production or simply watch a movie in a cinema. We are no longer treated equally under the law, and for no justifiable reason.
- The fact is that when the Queensland border was opened to VACCINATED ONLY, and unvaccinated people were BANNED from any public activity, COVID spread like wildfire. Removing the rights of one cohort in the community on the basis it would stop the spread simply did not hold true, and continues to not hold true.
- Despite what the Minister attests in her Statement of Compatibility, there is no justification for continuing to discriminate against people who have exercised their inalienable right to bodily autonomy, as is further protected by the 1947 Nuremberg Convention. Continuing to restrict the human rights of unvaccinated people (as this Bill would allow), when it has had no impact on the transmission of COVID, would represent an abuse of power and blatant discrimination.
- In addition, other restrictions on human rights (as listed in the Statement of Compatibility) amount to a gross overreach of power in the context of the current situation. The ability to restrict movement and gatherings (including peaceful assembly to protest), to limit a person's right to freedom of thought or expression through detention or restriction of movement, to again close borders (to name a few restrictions listed in the statement), are all grossly excessive in the current COVID

environment and create a dangerous opportunity for misuse or abuse of power. They cannot be justified in light of the current situation.

Furthermore, it has become clear that the impact of the virus, in general, has been far less severe than we were originally led to believe. Australian Bureau of Statistics figures prove that the impact of COVID is small compared to the many other illnesses and diseases that Australians face and, in fact, it can be argued that our government's restrictive response to COVID has actually caused sufferers of other medical conditions immeasurable harm, and potentially death, through denial or delay of treatment.

For context, some of the key ABS findings are as follows:

- There are 2,639 death registrations that have been received by the ABS where an individual is certified as having died from or with COVID-19 between the start of the pandemic and 31 January 2022. Approximately 1% of the 273,901 death registrations received by the ABS and certified by a doctor in Australia during the pandemic period are of people who have died with or from COVID-19.
- **Deaths due to COVID-19: Associated causes of death:** COVID-19 was the underlying cause of death for 2,556 registered deaths that have been received by the ABS occurring up to 31 January 2022. Most deaths due to COVID-19 have other conditions listed on the death certificate (91.4%). ... just under half of all certificates had both a causal sequence and pre-existing conditions listed on the certificate. On average, deaths due to COVID-19 had 2.7 other diseases and conditions certified alongside the virus."

While any death is tragic, the reality is most of these people were elderly with multiple health issues and it could be argued that a bad flu season, colds or other viruses may have resulted in a similar outcome. Statistically, the impact is small and does not constitute an emergency warranting ongoing powers to shut down businesses at whim or continue to discriminate against unvaccinated members of the population.

To extend the emergency provisions would be to create further stress, distress and uncertainty in our state for no justifiable reason. There is no longer an emergency!

I respectfully ask the committee to reject the Health and Ambulance Services Minister's Bill to extend the emergency provisions as they relate to COVID, and allow our community to begin to heal and recover, together.

Yours faithfully

Vicki Martin

