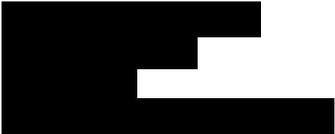


02/03/2022

Jacinta Cooke



Dear Community Support & Services Committee, Qld Members and Elected Ministers,

DO NOT PASS THE PUBLIC HEALTH & OTHER LEGISLATION (EXTENSION OF EXPIRING PROVISIONS) AMENDMENT #4 BILL 2022 PUT BEFORE YOU. STOP ALL COVID-19 VACCINATION MANDATES- They are unjust, divisive, disruptive and ineffective!

Do not pass this Bill

There is an extension request coming before our Queensland Government representatives that I would strongly urge you to cross the floor for, to show your opposition to the granting of this Public Health Act extension #4- not just on my behalf, but for all workers, their families and others impacted by the current emergency power mandate requirements to be 'fully vaccinated' (please note no specificity- that an unquantifiable, open term has been used). This Act coming before Parliament, is seeking to extend these current emergency powers in relation to Covid-19 from April to October. This is a request for extended non-elected representative to maintain powers which were not needed in the first place, and are no longer needed.

Help needed for real emergencies

As you would be aware, Queensland and our southern neighbour NSW have just had a very real emergency in relation to flooding and severe weather events. Having gone through Cyclone Larry in Babinda, FNQ back in 2006, and now these floods in Gympie, the impact of these times of emergency is not lost on me. It is for these times that an Emergency Act should be put in place as people are dealing with trying to get the absolute essentials needed to survive and function on a daily basis. Yesterday, we were finally able to make it into Gympie to provide a gas cooker, fuel and food to our friend's family whose rental house went completely under the flood waters. This family are now squatting in a vacant house for sale up the road without power, just to get by. They don't know what will happen from one day to the next, and are only one of many families currently in situations like this from a real, present emergency. This is where our efforts and focus needs to be- not on excluding people who are willing and able to provide the help, care and education needed for students and their families, so that life can get back to normal as soon as possible. Please recognise that we are not in a viral emergency anymore, only by the physical emergency imposed on us by our most recent significant weather event. I call on you, to stand tall to represent us in opposing any further extension of emergency powers in regard to Covid-19, particularly vaccination mandates across the sectors.

Masks & Vaccines ineffective

It is noted that as of this Friday 4th March, we are not required to wear masks (exceptions noted). If it is appropriate and reasonable for people not to be wearing masks, and there is no distinction between transmission from one person to another whether vaccinated or not, then there is no need at all for these vaccine mandates to also be extended. As yet, the Government has not provided any evidence to its peoples which states otherwise. Vaccination status does not preclude susceptibility or lower transmission rates, yet this is the continued rhetoric given. Too much data available contradicts any scientific need for mask wearing or trial vaccination medical procedures. As yet, I have not seen any information provided by our government to its citizens which unequivocally demonstrates the supposedly 'life-saving measures mandated'.

Elected leaders must make decisions for its citizenry, not unelected officials

It is also noted, that co-chair Chris Blyth publicly confirmed that "ATAGI has not provided a recommendation for mandates at any time point"¹. So why is the Qld Labour Government imposing this upon its citizenry? We elected you as our officials to make the decisions for what is best for everyone, not the emergency power advisors who are now demonstrating political tendencies. If there is time for playing politics, then it is no longer an emergency; flooding

¹ The Guardian, 8 December 2021: <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/dec/08/liberal-mp-andrew-laming-confronts-atagi-on-farrago-of-australian-vaccine-mandates>

crises taken in point. No one has time to get political- we just band together and help whoever we can, however we can, unless of course you are not 'allowed to' because of your 'inadequate', vaccination status. It is time to take back the reins and lead us out of this depression and oppression, as you were elected to do so. Please hear our cries as you seek to do what is right to fulfil your commitment to the people you were appointed to minister to. Please, cross the floor for us, and do not continue any powers of emergency for Covid-19- they are shown to be null and void.

Schools are not a 'high-risk' setting

Considering the recent evidence showing that children aged 0-19 inclusive, in fact only account for one sixth of the total cases currently in Queensland, then it is time to end the farce that education and child care settings are a high-risk setting. These low transmission rates between school-aged populations and the low numbers of hospitalisation and death due to Covid-19 infection², must surely be enough evidence to repeal any mandates in place, and to quash any concerns relating to the virus for those attending school or child care settings.

Please consider the average age of approved, registered teachers in 2020; 51.3% of whom were over 45 and 16.5% aged 60 and over³. Examining the data for Queensland's teachers from ages 40 to 69 inclusive, this large age range, still only accounts for less than one fifth of the total cases. Yet across the state today, there are only 25 people (unknown ages, co-morbidities or vaccination status not currently provided) requiring ICU intervention. Why then would mandatory vaccinations continue to be pushed as an effective response to a virus variant that thankfully now is significantly less harmful? The numbers just don't add up. These rates hospitalisation do not support the theory or justification that Queensland is in an emergency requiring the exercise of emergency powers, other than those related to the current flooding. An emergency definition reminds us of this fact, that 'an emergency is **an urgent, sudden, and serious event or an unforeseen change in circumstances that necessitates immediate action to remedy harm or avert imminent danger to life, health, or property; an exigency.**'⁴ The data does not support a viral emergency requiring the currently widespread, non-specific, non-localised blanket measures to avert significant harm as a result of Covid-19.

Return to normal as promised for herd immunity

Schools must return to normal and must not discriminate against staff who have enacted their basic human right to forego a trial medical procedure for any reason. The state is over 90% vaccinated⁵. It is time to move on and not restrict peoples' movements or right to work, based on their vaccination status, especially when it is ineffective and has not reduced transmission which was given as the primary reason for imposing unjust mandates in the first place. There is now no justification for these measures to be extended in any way, shape or form. I urge you to not pass the pandemic extension act and its relevant mandates any further. The significant threat of Covid-19 for most people has passed. We are now more fully aware of its impact on a range of demographics across multiple continents and our own states and territories, and have various treatment options to reduce its severity. Please allow us to have bodily autonomy so we can make decisions based on our own health status and level of risk without being broken down even further. Please, carefully consider the impact that any extension of emergency powers will continue to have socially, financially, academically and emotionally for the people of Queensland of all ages.

Personal Impact

I have been an educator for over 18 years across Primary and Secondary, including Special Education for which I have my Masters. It has been a very challenging time personally because I have had to choose between my health, and my career/students and income. I am the sole provider in our one income family due to [REDACTED] ongoing health issues. We have four children, and my eldest has several diagnoses which means that extra support is required as well. Not only has it been hard financially, but professionally, emotionally and socially because I have been disconnected with my school community and have felt very ostracised for my decision not to be vaccinated with a trial vaccine, which is of course, my innate Human Right. There were many other colleagues who didn't want to have the vaccines,

² Queensland Government, accessed 4th March 2022, <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/statistics>

³ Queensland College of Teachers, accessed 4th March 2022, https://cdn.qct.edu.au/pdf/registration/RegistrationSummary2020.pdf?_ga=2.233773854.1636248560.1646354338-875879495.1646354338

⁴ Cornell Law Institute, accessed 4th March 2022, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/emergency>

⁵ Queensland Government, accessed 4th March 2022, <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/statistics>

but got them anyway just so they could continue on living- [REDACTED] included- who now regrets this decision and allowing himself to be coerced. [REDACTED] is suffering with a significant vaccine injury after requiring several emergency trips to hospital and ongoing treatments which so far have not proven successful for supporting her now seriously compromised immune system. She now lives in fear, has lost significant weight, cannot work and will not meet with anyone or leave her home due to the possibility of another life-threatening encounter at only age 27. She only became vaccinated so that she could get married and have people attend their wedding celebration. Surely this is not okay. Please, respect our rights to choose for ourselves. We are not crazy anti-vaxxers with weirdo agendas- just regular, integral, fit and hardworking people who have had reservations about trial vaccines with real-life loved ones impacted; people who have researched and considered their own unique circumstances with a critical lens. Please don't alienate and punish us anymore. We want to contribute to our society in meaningful and positive ways. We have not done anything wrong, yet we are now despised by others in society for our personal choices and rights.⁶

Teachers and unqualified teachers at breaking point

My teaching colleagues have been doing it so tough and have been under so much pressure, and I can't be there to support them in my previous role as mentor and coach, or just as a fellow teaching colleague. I am devastated to think that if experienced teachers are currently struggling, then how much harder must it be for the unqualified university students who have taken my place, and have such limited support since all of our middle leadership is not at school to support them, and our senior leadership is back on deck with face-to-face teaching loads as well. So who then, is supporting them? These staff have not even completed their own tertiary education and have been put in this extremely challenging environment; having to complete university tasks whilst still trying to manage and teach students in the classroom amidst the chaos of real emergencies. I am astounded to think that this has been permitted, let alone now when we are already aware of the significant workplace stresses on teachers and the limited staffing across our educational settings. Why should this mandate for educators and school staff continue to be enacted? Please show the cost-benefit analysis. There are tens of thousands of us just waiting to come back on site and get on with teaching our struggling students and supporting our stressed colleagues! If the government is not careful, there will end up being a pandemic of stress-related leave and work-cover or Fair Work Australia applications.

Return to normal a must for all

The Qld Government dangled the carrot to its citizens to say that when vaccination uptake rates were high enough, that we could then go back to normal, yet this appears not to be happening. Please explain and outline the specific reasons with evidence, so I can at least be confident that this is for the greater good, as there hasn't been anything forthcoming so far which would show due diligence or cause for extending emergency powers or legislation in any way. The Bill didn't even have the education sector listed as a source of consultation⁷. We need people to want to become teachers, and not to burn them out before they've even begun. We need to have faith in our elected officials that we can move on from this situation, and the sooner the better. We need justice to be served for those who have been unjustly ostracised for their personal human rights and health-based choices.

I plead with you all, as our elected ministers and advisors in relating to the proposed Public Health Bill Extension #4, to stand up and walk across the floor by making a conscience vote against the proposed Bill on behalf of us ordinary Australians, who are desperate to have an income, and to get on with doing what we love- to teach, help and care for others to the best of our abilities. We have been doing it tough in more ways than one can count, and we need critical, common sense to prevail, and of course, hope- now more than ever!

Please be the reason that I am proud to be an Aussie; knowing that our voices of reason have been heard by our elected government and subsequent inquiring bodies, and have been acted on responsively and respectfully in good faith.

Yours Desperately Hoping,

Jacinta I Cooke

Jacinta I Cooke

⁶ Daily Mail Australia, 22nd February 2022, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10537241/Vaccinated-people-feel-antipathy-refuse-Covid-19-jab-survey-shows.html>

⁷ The State of Queensland, page 5, accessed 3rd March 2022, <https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/tp/2022/5722T166-3D77.pdf>