

4th March, 2022

Re: Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022

Dear Community Support and Services Committee,

I am writing to express my strong objection to any extension of the Emergency Bill until 31st October 2022. Not only does overwhelming evidence indicate that this can no longer be justified, but it will not be tolerated by Queenslanders who are exhausted from the pandemic and who are now contending with floods. People have had enough and desperately need to return to normal life.

- The virus is doing what viruses do – i.e. mutating into less lethal variants so as not to kill their hosts, and thereby risk unwittingly destroying themselves in the process.
- The resultant Omicron variant's extremely low death rate means Covid-19 is killing very few people, and it only ranks as 38th in causes of death. Where death has occurred, old age and multiple underlying conditions have been significant contributing factors. This situation does not constitute an emergency that could reasonably justify the extension of powers.
- The government's own modelling indicates the peak has now passed.
- Clear data indicates over-inflation of case numbers, and this can no longer be ignored. Queenslanders tolerate a far greater number of road deaths and influenza deaths each year without emergency measures. People readily accept these risks in their daily lives because they understand that the pursuit of a life without risk is a fantasy, and that the benefits of living a fulfilling life vastly outweigh the risks involved.
- The impact on the economy, and the critical shortages created by lost jobs and closed businesses, presents a far greater risk to Queenslanders than the negligible risk of a virus that has a very high survival rate.
- The discrimination that has occurred under state emergency powers is unacceptable in a democratic society. The continuation of these emergency powers can not be justified in a world where multiple governments are now rolling back restrictions.
- The risk of viral transmission is greatly outweighed by a much greater pandemic of poor mental health that urgently needs to be rectified by the immediate restoration of normality. Suicide is the leading cause of death for adolescents and young adults, and the risks have only escalated as young people have had every aspect of their lives thrown into chaos just as they were standing on the threshold of adult life. Pandemic control measures have directly impacted young people's developmental trajectory, and this will have lasting impacts upon their health, education, and life outcomes.

In light of this evidence, the only rational decision is to immediately end the state of emergency, and restore normal societal functioning and economic prosperity for all Queenslanders. This will retain people's confidence in a government and society that acts with integrity, decency, and in accordance with human rights.



Alison van Eps

