

Submission to Community Support and Services Committee

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

To the Committee Secretary,

I **object** to all parts of the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022.

The 'emergency powers', that have been in use over the past 2 years have resulted in the degradation of human rights, dignity and fundamental freedoms of Queenslanders.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 3) states: "Human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms are to be fully respected (and the) interests and welfare of the individual should have priority over the sole interest of science or society". This is not being upheld in Queensland! Many of my family members have lost their jobs, been segregated, denied access to family, places and events all because of the decisions made under the 'emergency powers'! It is disgraceful! They are all good, law abiding citizens who have been ruined mentally, financially and otherwise by the decisions made under the 'emergency powers'. This needs to stop!

Covid-19 variants have mutated to be less harmful and covid-19 should now be downgraded, dealt with as an endemic disease much like the flu, just like many places around the world are doing. We have been through the worst, with the government neglecting to even focus on early treatment or even on ensuring they inform the public on simple effective ways to boost their immune systems, a gross oversight in my eyes.

Australia is a democracy and the use of this legislation has allowed the State Government to bypass the usual democratic process without just cause.

The original Public Health Act 2005 allowed a maximum allowable extension of only 7 days at a time and asking Queenslanders to again approve an extension of emergency powers (especially by the maximum allowable limit of 6 months) must be extensively scrutinised and justified by empirical evidence and sound health advice, made available to public scrutiny, including a detailed risk-benefit analysis of the continuation of such powers.

There were 274 Deaths on Queensland roads in 2021 vs a total of 69 confirmed covid-19 deaths in Queensland since the pandemic began, as cited on the Australian Bureau of Statistics website ([COVID-19 Mortality in Australia | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/australian-bureau-of-statistics/publications/mortality-in-australia)). This being the case, covid-19 is safer than driving our cars!!

Consider this, without the declaration of a State Emergency, which gave rise to the expansion of existing powers and continued extension of emergency powers, the actions of the State Government in their response to the Covid-19 pandemic would be considered illegal, so with the threat of Covid-19 severely reduced, it is essential that it be downgraded from pandemic, to endemic, and any and all extra powers that have been extended in the past, revoked!

Extending the expiring provisions by the maximum allowable amount under these conditions is scientifically unjustified and would be a violation of Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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 abuse of emergency powers. The language "an event or a serious of events that has contributed to or may contribute

to serious adverse effects on the health of persons in Queensland” could be attributed to a multitude of diseases, health risks and other emergencies, but has historically only been invoked in absolutely severe and essential circumstances, which arguably the current Covid-19 situation in Queensland does not meet.

The Health Minister must declare an end to the public health emergency as soon as he/she is satisfied it is no longer necessary to exercise powers under section 324 Public Health Act 2005, but the Health Minister has not clarified what specific conditions/parameters would satisfy this declaration. This is despite the drastic improvement of the health risks presented by the original ‘Covid-19 emergency’ and despite countries around the world starting to treat Covid-19 as an endemic disease like ‘the flu’.

I ask that the committee request and review in detail the scientific literature and supporting evidence the Health Minister is relying on to justify a 6 month extension of the expiring provisions 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 information is vital for government transparency, government oversight and to safeguard against potential abuse of the Public Health Act 2005.

Kind regards,

Hamish Gray.

My Details

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