

Date:

reviewing public health restrictions. 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 original Public Health Act 2005 allowed a maximum allowable extension of only 7 days at a time, which has since been grossly extended without appropriate justification. Human rights and freedoms are expected to be impacted during a State of Emergency, but the extended use of the Public Health Act 2005 for the past 2 years is unprecedented and unreasonably impacting the unalienable rights of Queenslanders. Australia did not extend the State of Emergency for this long during the 1918 Influenza pandemic, despite the mortality and public health risk. Even the dictatorial Roman Empire could not declare a "State of Emergency" for longer than 6 months (even during war time) due to the implications on the rights and freedoms of citizens. Australia is a democracy and the use of this legislation has allowed the State Government to bypass the usual democratic process without just cause. Any further extensions of emergency powers must be heavily scrutinised.

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.

Additional Notes:

Regards,
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3 March
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