

4 March 2022

Committee Secretary
Community Support and Services Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

Dear Sir/Madam,

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

I refer to the above Bill which is currently being considered by the Community Support and Services Committee and wish to make known to the Committee, my opposition to this Bill being passed through the Queensland Parliament.

Over the past two years the Queensland Government has had extraordinary powers under the Public Health Regulation to respond to the threats introduced by the pandemic. They have used these powers in a broad array to restrict movement, lifestyle and the ability to earn a living. There has not been a citizen of Queensland that their extraordinary powers have not impacted. Our families, our friendships, our businesses, our mental health and our economy have suffered due to the restrictions implemented under these powers. Many, many Queenslanders have put their lives on hold due to the restrictions enforced on them by the Queensland State Government. After a full two years living as a citizen under these powers, I request that they be terminated in full, particularly as there is valid evidence that this is no longer an 'emergency' and can be managed sufficiently outside of these powers.

- The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reported 2 639 deaths where people died *with or from* COVID-19, that occurred since the beginning of the pandemic to 31 January 2022. The median age of males and females who died from COVID-19 in Australia was 81.2 years of age and 86 years of age respectively. The ABS records that the male and female life expectancy in Australia is 81.2 years of age and 85.3 years of age respectively. This does not warrant extension of Public Health powers
- Queensland has a double vaccination rate of 90.93% as at 1st March 2022. The Queensland State Government has continuously sent clear messaging for months that high vaccination rates will result in stopping the spread of COVID-19, ending the restrictions and resulting in herd immunity.
- Many, many countries across the world (who are more densely populated and are not island nations like Australia) have called an end to mandates and restrictions stating a need to live with the virus
- Annastacia Palaszczuk stated in the Queensland Parliament on 22 February 2022 that it is time to get our lives back to normal
- Chief Health Officer John Gerrard has stated we should "live with the virus", if this is so, why do we need an extension of Public Health powers?

Since the introduction of the Public Health powers we have witnessed a societal decline of:

- Freedom and civil liberties

- Bodily autonomy – those who have exercised their right to bodily autonomy in relation to the COVID-19 vaccinations have suffered systemic discrimination
- Community cohesion
- The education of children
- Open debate and discussion

In addition, we have witnessed an economic decline, in the way of:

- Small business closures
- Skilled and unskilled staff shortages across a variety of employment sectors
- Increased pressures on small businesses to comply with unclear, contradictory and rapidly changing directions made under these public health powers, resulting in significant economic cost and losses. Some of these directions do not align with other pre-existing laws and disregard recognised human rights
- The tourism industry
- Inflation and increases to the cost of living

The Queensland State Government have stated themselves that the threat of serious illness and death as a result of COVID-19 has reduced significantly.

After living two years under the rule of these public health powers and having our lives significantly and destructively turned every which way by the State Government using these powers, I request an end to this extensive power given to a very small number of people, over a very large number of people. I, and many of the ordinary people that I connect with in my day-to-day life, do not believe we are in a state of emergency to justify extending this power.

I request that my submission be considered by the committee, but not published for confidentiality reasons.

Sincerely,

Caleb McLay

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