

4 March 2022

Dear Committee,

I write to state that I do NOT want an extension to the Emergency Bill until October 2022. I believe this is absolutely unnecessary for a number of reasons.

- The Emergency Bill was first granted based on the death rate due to the Alpha and Delta strains. The current prevalent variant, Omicron, has an extremely low death rate in comparison to the other strains. The original case modelling for Omicron was inaccurate and perceived threat of Omicron has been grossly overstated.
- Extending the Emergency Bill powers based on the number of Covid cases and Covid deaths in Queensland is unnecessary as actual case numbers clearly demonstrate that Omicron deaths are very few.
- The powers that the Bill gives are far-reaching and all-encompassing. They have created a distrust among the population that these powers could be abused. Extending the Bill unnecessarily fuels that distrust.
- Continuation of these emergency powers encourages continued discrimination. It is unacceptable in a democratic society to continue to extend a Bill that impinges on individuals' rights and liberties.
- The way Covid statistics have been collected and recorded by the government, and reported by mainstream media, and the constant overplay of the risks of Covid has caused undue fear amongst many people in our communities. Extending the Emergency Bill gives the public the false impression that the risks of Omicron outweigh the benefits of social interaction, nutritional food, exercise and ongoing medical care.
- Extending the Emergency Bill does not give sufficient regard for individuals' rights and liberties.
- Parts of the legislation have already been extended, and these are more than ample in allowing Queenslanders to Reunite and Recover.
- Extending the Emergency Bill until October will put lives at risk, cause more distress and put more pressure on an already strained medical system.

On a personal note:

- Employing or dismissing workers based on their vaccination status is discriminatory, and extending the Emergency Bill implies that these measures continue to be necessary without any regard for risk versus benefit. We have lost thousands of medical professionals already due to the vaccine mandates that totally overrode people's right to bodily autonomy. Almost every other industry has been affected by employers mandating their employees without undertaking an adequate consultation and risk assessment process. This includes me personally as a teacher. Most employers genuinely believe they are working for the greater good, and protecting themselves, their workers and their clients by mandating the vaccine. They have totally overlooked their employees' individual needs and rights. The extension of the Emergency Bill gives the impression that there is an ongoing, major threat and crisis when ABS statistics show this is clearly not the case. Even if this were the case, the past years of misinformation by the government and mainstream media give the false impression that vaccination is the silver bullet that will magically stop transmission and infection. There has been no consideration given to those who have genuine reasons, questions, or a conscientious

objection to being vaccinated, to the limited protection the vaccination provides against infection or transmission or to ensuring Queenslanders adopt long term behaviours that will protect them from a plethora of illnesses rather than just Covid.

- My family has already been, and continues to be, affected by the flow on effects of this Act in numerous ways. The inability to get timely, in person medical treatment has meant two family members suffered with separate undiagnosed medical conditions for longer than they should have. Each family member required multiple consultations to get the correct diagnosis and was prescribed at least one medication to treat a condition they did not have. This was potentially dangerous as well as a waste of resources. It is only a matter of luck that neither of my family members suffered more severe consequences.
- Personally, I have been affected by the mandates. It has been almost impossible to find quality, unbiased information about the real risk of contracting Covid in my workplace, the risk to my health should I fall ill with Covid, the risks versus benefits of different protective measures I have been asked to implement in my classroom, the safety profile of different vaccines and the risk reduction to me personally if I am vaccinated. As variants change, so too does the risk profile. However, the continuation of the Emergency Bill does not take this into account. The toll that this mandate has taken on me personally, and my family, is considerable. I have been diagnosed with multiple mental health issues since the mandate was announced, which have made it impossible to return to my teaching position this year. The added anguish of being threatened with suspension and termination for not being vaccinated has negatively impacted my treatment. Should the Emergency Bill be extended, the threat of not being able to provide for my family financially, of being terminated from a job I love with all my heart and soul, is likely to further impede my recovery. I feel coerced into making a decision without knowing all the facts. I feel pressured for not complying with societal norms. I feel upset that my personal health profile, or viewpoint is irrelevant. I feel like my body is not my own.
- There has been very little emphasis on other ways that people can take responsibility for their own well-being. The Emergency Bill gives the false impression that we need extraordinary measures to fight off what has a 0.08% death rate in Queensland according to the figures provided on page 1 of the Explanatory notes accompanying the amendment (calculated by dividing 399 deaths out of over 507 746 infections). What about good food, exercise, managing lifestyle factors? Many have been coerced into being vaccinated out of an inflated fear of serious illness, death, or financial hardship. I know people who have experienced ill health because of the vaccines that have been dismissed and ignored. Work colleagues, family and friends dismiss their own ongoing side effects from the vaccines as 'the price I have to pay to do my part in protecting society'. They have put their own health behind that of unknown others. It is now clear that many Queenslanders have had Covid, recovered and now have natural immunity. The Government itself has also stated that the peak has now passed.
- For over two years, the world has been bombarded with a constant barrage of information about the dangers of Covid. As a result, people are making huge, unnecessary changes to their daily lives that have had, and continue to have, ongoing negative effects on themselves and others. I personally know people who have isolated themselves from family and friends for months for fear of catching Covid, who are scared to go out and do grocery shopping for fear of being infected,

won't even walk their dogs on a quiet suburban street because they may pass someone who is Covid-positive, or who have delayed medical check-ups because they are so fearful of contracting what, for the vast majority of people is a mild, temporary illness. However, the negative effects of their isolation (depression, anxiety, fear), poor diet/restricted food intake, decline in physical fitness, and delaying medical care when they have a chronic, ongoing condition that requires regular check-ups far outweighs any perceived risk reduction.

The negative effects of continuing mandates and the pressure placed on Queenslanders through lost jobs and pressured health and education systems, far outweigh any positives gained from extending emergency powers without an adequate reason.

Yours sincerely,

 Recoverable Signature

X Joanne Gell

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Joanne Gell

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