

4 March 2022

Committee Secretary
Community Support and Services Committee
Email: cssc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary,

**RE: PUBLIC HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION (EXTENSION OF EXPIRING PROVISIONS)
AMENDMENT BILL 2022 (BILL)**

I am writing to formally object to the above bill and extension of the pandemic State of Emergency in Queensland. The reasons for my objection include the following:

- The measures taken by the government to date have been effective in reducing transmission and effects of the virus. Vaccination rates in Queensland are now above 90%, numbers of cases and hospitalisations are reducing to manageable levels, and the virus itself is becoming less severe. Further extension of emergency powers is unnecessary to manage what is now becoming another endemic virus.
- Additional preventative and reactive treatments for the virus are constantly becoming available, levels of vaccine and natural immunity in the population are increasing, and preparedness and awareness of the risks and prevention of the virus are high. Predicted worst case scenarios have not eventuated and further severe outbreaks of this particular virus requiring use of the emergency powers are unlikely.
- The unintended effects of the State of Emergency powers have been devastating and incalculable. These include effects on mental and physical health, businesses and livelihoods due to measures such as lockdowns, social distancing, contact tracing, mask wearing, quarantine, border closures and vaccine mandates. These negative effects now outweigh the ongoing benefits of the emergency powers, which must be revoked to allow the community to begin to recover fully from the effects of the pandemic.
- The State of Emergency has had the effect of removing basic human rights from the Queensland population for the previous 2 years, including rights to equality, freedom of movement, peaceful assembly, privacy, belief, participating in public life, protection of children, liberty, education and health services. This should not be permitted to occur for an extended period and these rights must be restored urgently.
- The Public Health Act remains in place and available for the government to declare a public health emergency at any time in the future should it become truly necessary for any reason.
- The timing of this bill has been rushed, with little time for proper parliamentary or community debate. Particularly given the current flood crisis, it is unlikely the community will even be aware it is being considered, let alone able to complete submissions by the deadline. Such important and far-reaching legislation should be thoroughly scrutinised, for this reason the bill should be rejected until proper consultation can take place.

I thank you for your consideration of this submission and urge to committee to reject this bill and allow the Queensland community to begin to return to normality in their lifestyle, livelihoods and governance.

Regards,
Clem Kellar