

**Submission**

**Committee Secretary**

**Economics and Governance Committee**

**Parliament House**

**George Street**

**Brisbane Qld 4000**

### **New Qld Bill Extends Emergency Powers to 30 April 2022**

**On 16 June 2021, the Minister for Health, Yvette D'Ath, tabled a new Bill extending the Public Health Emergency Response measures from 30 September 2021 to 30 April 2022.**

**The Public Health and Other Legislation (Further Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2021 extends a range of emergency measures, including the extraordinary powers of the Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young.**

**These powers include the ability to impose restrictions on the free movement of citizens, their ability to travel, conduct a business, attend school, church or sport, as well as the power to issue mandates on mask wearing, social distancing rules, the numbers of persons who can gather at any one time, border closures, area lockdowns and quarantine mandates.**

**The Bill also extends emergency measures, and creates new ones, for the care of mental health patients and persons with cognitive or intellectual disability, the operation of prisons and youth detention centres and related measures.**

**In response to the tabling of this bill I wish to state, as follows.**

**Since early 2020, Queenslanders have been under, at times, very strict limitations pertaining to their activities and movements due to the Covid 19 restrictions placed upon them by the Queensland government. From the time Queenslanders were first told we needed a 'short, sharp lockdown' to 'flatten the curve', the Government has released no 'exit strategy' or 'roadmap' for a way out of the current 'emergency' conditions – an 'emergency' which many agree, is starting to look ominously permanent. The Bill was referred to the Health Committee by the Minister - in the Speech. However, it appears the Bill did not go to the Health Committee, but the Bill instead appears on the list for the Economics and Governance Committee.**

**Is Covid 19 not a Public Health issue and does the Bill not extend powers of the Health Minister? And if so, why has the Health Committee not been consulted on this Bill? These measures are proposed to extend and alter conditions associated with the most vulnerable people in the community due to a health 'pandemic'. Yet, the focus and underlying relevance of the Bill appears to be Economics and Governance. Does the Bill**

utilise Public Health contributions and utilise current statistics and relevant feedback relating to the success/ or otherwise of the restrictive measures already being enforced upon Queenslanders for this extensive period of time?

To be frank, the Bill is draconian and aims to further bolster the powers of government to continually exert their authority upon the average citizen, whose tax is paying for the wages of those in government. This Bill gives extended and far-reaching powers to the government to impose restrictions on the freedom of Queenslanders citizens and visitors to the State of Queensland, when, and if, it sees fit. Where does the buck stop and where are the checks and balances to prevent tyranny?

The electronic notices aspect deeming that a communication is received, because it has been sent, is ludicrous and implies that there is basically no need to contact a person electronically at all – they MUST comply, whether they understand their ‘obligations’ under this renewed proposed legislation or not. Think non-English speakers and Indigenous for a start. Imposing lockdowns upon people by electronic means of communication and claiming that a person is aware - despite no proof of that knowledge being established - facilitates authoritarian abuse of this notification system. People can lose their phones or have them stolen. It happens all the time, sometimes conveniently. Police should SERVE the documents and explain them to the person - in person - and officially acknowledge the person’s receipt of those documents PRIOR to any action being taken. The approach proposed within the Bill is extreme government authority overreach, which inevitably impacts harshly upon the rights of the most disadvantaged people in our society and undermines the integrity of the judicial system.

Quarantine has not been so successful in Queensland, where many cases of Covid 19 and “variants’ have been transmitted to people in Quarantine and to the general public from people leaving quarantine, but who are infectious. The borders should have been completely shut to foreign arrivals, which would have been a better and more cost-effective response and would have sustained the least impact on the Queensland citizens. Or was that measure not taken in the interests of Economy and Governance? Does Economy and Governance take priority over the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders?

How far will this totalitarian encroachment upon Queenslanders by the government go, and when will it end, if ever? The Queensland Government and all State governments have had more than enough time to come up with a strategy to alleviate these strict impositions upon hard working Queenslanders, who have suffered immeasurably due to Covid 19 lockdowns, bans and mandates. Notably, the Minister espouses the suffering of the government representatives, while totally ignoring the suffering of Queenslanders being severely impacted by the members of the government and law enforcement, due to these totalitarian laws. Extending these draconian measures will only draw the same results as have already demonstrated by the previous and current restrictions. What are the benchmarks here and how are they transparent and measurable? Has the government ever considered the negative social impacts of these measures, including increases in mental health issues and suicides they have caused? This needs to be done as a matter of urgency before these measures are even considered.

**Thank you for your time,**

**Elizabeth Carlsen**

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