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Chamber Address:
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7th July 2021

Dear Sir

The Kingaroy Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. (KCCI) wishes to deliver this submission in relation to **Part 4, Clause 8 - Public Health and Other Legislation (Further Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2021**.

The Kingaroy Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. feels that the extension to these orders from **30th September 2021 to 30th April 2022** could cause major disruptions to the growth and operation of many small businesses throughout our region. With current orders being extended for 3 months already from **29th June 2021 to 30th September 2021** we cannot see any reason to extend them until **30th April 2022**.

Whilst KCCI understand the necessity to keep the public safe from the spread of this virus, constant lockdown at any time, in any part of the state, will affect all businesses throughout Queensland.

The Concerns

We have seen festivals, sporting events, pubs and clubs all suffer from these health orders, and we will not stand by and see our members and their staff suffer the loss of income because of the decision from the Chief Health Officer given more power to easily lock small businesses down or run at reduced capacity whilst large sporting arenas or retail outlets can trade as normal.

If the above-mentioned bill is passed through Queensland Parliament, we will see that small businesses will be operating under the CHO's directives for around two years which is an unprecedented length of time for small business to try and navigate. With the uncertainty of trading under the current CHO's restrictions lingering in the minds of small businesses in our region, and we would suspect across the state, investing in staff and growth will and has been slowing due to the fear of huge income losses.

The out-of-control mental wellbeing issue that is being caused by the economic uncertainty that can be directly linked to living under these orders has become more than some can handle with our region having some of the highest rates of suicide in the state. The growing mental health issue, especially since this pandemic has hit, has seen our chamber have to implement a mental wellbeing program to help small business and their staff deal with the added pressures of life currently affecting people on a day-to-day basis. Knowing that the CHO's powers could be extending until April 30th, 2022, could see a massive spike in mental health related losses for small business across Queensland.

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The Future

The Kingaroy Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. would instead like to see the Queensland Government invest their time and resources into

1. Opening more vaccination hubs throughout the state so more people can get vaccinated more easily, especially in rural and regional locations.
2. Have all frontline workers vaccinated ASAP.
3. Develop Clear messaging around restrictions and be more consistent when it comes to levels of restrictions. For example, don't restrict numbers of patrons at pubs and clubs but allow tens of thousands to attend the football.
4. Invest in stimulus packages for rural areas especially in agriculture and water on the back of the centenary drought and now exacerbated by the pandemic.
5. Back to plan to build the Wellcamp Quarantine Facility and invest in the construction of it. Do not wait for the federal government to do so.
6. Introduce debatable legislation around these powers so the best possible solutions can be implemented moving forward with input from all members of parliament instead of an add hock, act as it happens, spur of the moment action plan.

Yours Sincerely

Damien Martoo
KCCI President