

Economic and Governance Committee

Queensland Parliament

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To the Committee

RE: Extension of the State of Emergency powers

On the 16th June 2021 Minister for Health Yvette D'ath table a bill for the extension of emergency powers past the expiry date of the current already extended date of the 27th September 2021 to the 30th April 2022. This effectively will take Queensland to over 2 years being governed under such an order. Ms D'ath stated that the bill would be referred to the Health and Environment Committee for review, however contrary to her representation, it has instead been referred to the Economic and Governance Committee, even though the "emergency" is of a health nature.

The following are my views for consideration:

- Never in the history of Australia, have these state of emergency powers been used for such an extended period or for a health condition. Not for Spanish, Hong Kong, Swine, Bird, or any other kind of influenza. The SOE just creates a platform for the Government to instigate new control measures quickly and without debate (or input from the public). Ms D'ath claimed that the Bill is consistent with Human Rights Legislation, however many concerned Queenslanders do not share that view and as the Minister and her department refuse to release satisfactory evidence and data regarding the pandemic and on which their health directives are based, the transparency and accountability of the Department of Health is in question. It is becoming increasingly obvious to the people of Queensland that their rights are being removed by an over-reaching Government exerting absolute authority with no consultation with their constituents.
- There is no need for a State of Emergency for this "pandemic". Personally I do not know of anyone that has even contracted Covid, and with only 7 deaths in Queensland since March 2020, the Government has had to resort to reporting cases to perpetuate the fear of the virus. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, there were 4124 influenza deaths in 2019 and no additional restrictions or health measures were deemed necessary. The fear and propagation of "cases" and the whole contact tracing and quarantining of healthy individuals defies logic. Never before has a healthy person had to be tested for a disease that they are showing no symptoms of. The virus will work its way through the community, yes, but how many are actually being hospitalised? No more, I would suggest than a bad flu season. By all means protect the vulnerable (aged and elderly) but they would not want to see their children and grandchildren being restricted under these measures for their sake.
- Extending the lockdown, only increases the uncertainty and hopelessness of those in the community that are challenged by mental health issues because of the restrictions to their normal life. I fear the suicide rates in the non-vulnerable age groups will continue to rise, as it did in 2020.
- Healthy people, who take responsibility for their own health using natural and alternative therapies are no burden on the health system (many rarely visiting a GP or hospital), are especially impacted by this proposed extension as the restrictions heavily impact their daily

ethos and health practices (eg. Mask wearing, exercise/gym, sun exposure etc). It is concerning to them that their health may decline under these conditions and therefore create an increased burden on government services. Thousands of people in Queensland die of conditions caused by smoking and obesity, yet there are never any restrictions placed on their lifestyles.

- QR Codes have been brought in under the guise of contact tracing, however it is of great concern to many, that the data collected is used for nefarious purposes. Most citizens are totally unaware that they have the right to refuse downloading the App under the Privacy Act, but they are never made aware of this fact. The use of the QR codes abuses the trust of many citizens that want to do “the right thing” and then, being perfectly healthy are subjected to quarantining rules as they happened to be in the same vicinity as a “case” (who may or may not be sick either).
- The tourism and hospitality sector has been heavily impacted and is suffering greatly from the extension of SOE and all the uncertainty that goes with it. Millions of dollars have been lost and businesses forced to close down, due to the cancelled bookings and loss of trade, due to over-bearing and nonsensical lockdowns and restrictions.

If economic recovery is truly an aim, then the SOE would cease immediately and the Government would implement strategies that would educate people on how they can improve their health outcomes, no matter what virus or disease comes along. We must all learn to live with it and get on with recovery of our great state.

Regards,

Kate Cherry

