

Public Health and Other Legislation (COVID-19 Management) Amendment Bill 2022

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Submitted by: adriana marsh
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Submitter Comments:

To the Committee, I feel strongly that this ongoing use of emergency powers in Queensland is unnecessary and that they should be allowed to expire on 31 October 2022 as they are supposed to. Many others feel the same. A true State of Emergency has not existed for many months, if it truly existed at all. The calling of a Pandemic is squarely questionable, but that is a matter for any future Royal Commission or Inquiry I hope. I also believe that such powers should ONLY be exercised by a Minister, who is a democratically elected representative of the people, who is ACCOUNTABLE to the people for all actions taken. The exercise of these emergency powers have had far reaching damaging impact for questionable gain - creating socio-emotional, economic, and even health impacts. The CHO is neither elected OR accountable. Also current wording of phrases, like "serious risk" are of concern. Terms have not been clearly defined in the Bill – the meaning is left entirely up to CHO's own discretion. Also concerning is the Bill's proposal to extend emergency power provisions at corrective services facilities for another year. Perhaps most concerning of all is the virtual silence on the introduction of the Bill, both in the mainstream media and elsewhere. This is EXTREMELY Troubling. Why the secrecy? The Departmental Briefing Paper states: "A CONFIDENTIAL CONSULTATION paper about the proposed changes to the Chief Health Officer's powers .. was distributed to targeted stakeholders" That sounds suspiciously like stakeholders consulted on the Bill are being prevented by the Government from discussing the contents of the Bill, either publicly or with their membership. Who are these Stakeholders? Such secrecy is Unacceptable. This is a significant issue and there should be a wide-ranging and open public debate on how the State steps away from the ongoing state of emergency powers framework.