

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

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Submitted by: The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists -
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The Royal
Australian &
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College of
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Queensland Branch

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Committee Secretary
Health and Environment Committee
Parliament House
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BRISBANE QLD 4000

Via email to: HEC@parliament.qld.gov.au

To the Health and Environment Committee

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

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the *Inquiry into the Public Health and Other Legislation (COVID-19 Management) Amendment Bill 2022* (the Bill).

The temporary emergency framework to manage Queensland's COVID-19 pandemic response expires on 31 October 2022.

Rather than further extend the current 'declared public health emergency' for COVID-19, the Bill proposes temporary powers to manage COVID-19 as a notifiable condition under the *Public Health Act 2005* until 31 October 2023.

The RANZCP Queensland Branch would support the proposal to restore the *Public Health Act 2005* to its pre-pandemic operation.

The Branch supports removing (repealing) the Chief Health Officer's (CHO) power to issue public health directions, except in circumstances where the CHO is satisfied the direction is reasonably necessary to prevent or respond to a serious risk to the public health system or community because of COVID-19, as well as authorising the CHO to continue to issue public health directions about:

- isolation and quarantine of diagnosed cases and symptomatic close contacts
- requiring masks to be carried or worn in specified vulnerable and high-risk settings
- requiring workers in vulnerable and high-risk settings to be vaccinated.

To mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in the community, the RANZCP Queensland Branch endorses the temporary powers to manage COVID-19 as a notifiable condition under the *Public Health Act 2005* until 31 October 2023.

To discuss this submission please contact me via Ms Nada Martinovic, Policy and Advocacy Advisor (Queensland Branch), at [REDACTED] or on [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely

Professor Brett Emmerson AM
Chair, RANZCP Queensland Branch Committee