

Dear Health and Environment Committee,

I am writing a submission against the Public Health and Other Legislation (extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2020. While I agree that the coronavirus outbreak needs careful and considered attention, I do not agree that the majority of the power should be vested with one individual, who has not been voted for in a democratic process. Dr Jeanette Young has the power to stop and start life as we know it under this bill. She can put everyone under what is effectively house arrest for a time; she can close the state borders; she can mandate what people all over the state can and can't do with their bodies with regards to mask wearing, hugging, hand shaking, and so on. This is an enormous amount of power for one person to wield. It is not healthy for her and it is certainly not healthy for us, the citizens of Queensland. Any legislation that has such a major impact on the lives of Queenslanders should be put forward by an accountable group of individuals who have been voted for by the citizens they seek to protect. Naturally, they should have qualifications in medicine and health. But it should not rest on one woman's shoulders whether the Queensland border is open or shut; whether all of Brisbane goes to work or not; and whether all of us should have to cover our faces.

Having a group of individuals who have been voted for in a democratic process to handle this health situation would be infinitely more beneficial than the current situation. Dr Jeannette Young does not always think of people's individual situations. Sometimes she doesn't even particularly understand the groups whom her public health orders hit hardest. For instance, last year she mandated for a time that all individuals going into hospitals on the Western Downs would need to wear masks. She didn't provide any exemptions for people who were vomiting, having difficulty breathing, or who had a known history of trauma related to assault which would make mask wearing most unsuitable. As a result, I nearly passed out in hospital when I was there for an appointment for my three-month-old baby. Multiple times, I nearly dropped her. Staff told me their hands were tied, because the order was from the CHO, and if they disobeyed it, they would lose their jobs! A friend of mine was also forced to wear a mask when she was vomiting every five to ten minutes. This sort of situation is most unacceptable.

We have also seen instances where members of the public just south of the border could not go to their nearest hospital because of the border closures. This caused enormous grief for many people. In a notable case, one woman lost one of her twins. This sort of mistake is deadly. We are seeking to protect the vulnerable during this pandemic, not harm them. One woman by herself can make (and has made) terrible and tragic mistakes. Again, this is unacceptable. Dr Jeannette Young – a woman who was never voted into power by Queenslanders – should not have this power. We need representatives of the people to handle this situation, not merely a public servant who doesn't actually understand all the people in all the regions that she is affecting.

Additionally, Dr Jeanette Young's advice has been very one dimensional. For example, she espouses mask wearing when daily nasal rinsing with a hygienic saline solution is far more effective at preventing infections gaining a hold. If a voted-in group with relevant qualifications were managing this situation, more ideas would be suggested and more effective ways of handling the situation could be found.

I could go on, but I would like to keep this brief. My suggestions as a Queenslanders include the following:

- Allow citizens a voting period on those who will manage the health situation with relation to Covid. Those put forward should have the relevant health qualifications. They should come from all walks of life and a variety of regions across the state, so that they adequately represent the people's wishes while seeking to work for our good.
- This voting period should occur before the expiration of the current Public Health and Other Legislation bill, to allow for a smooth transition.
- Allow for frequent referendums on the public health orders, so that the government can continue to gauge the trust of the people during this situation and whether its current powers are appropriate.
- Continue to search for varied ways of boosting people's health and immune systems during this time, and allow this to be part of the public health advice. Washing hands is excellent. But if a virus does enter the body through the nose or mouth, daily nasal rinsing is an effective way of lowering the viral load, making someone less contagious and less sick.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.