

Health and Environment Committee

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Categories: Submission

We have grave concerns regarding the issues faced by citizens in Queensland and authority in relation to Covid 19 response.

Firstly, we commend Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk and her Government for its outstanding work in response to this threat.

It is imperative that we not only listen to but also heed the advice of experts and whole heartedly support the decisions made by our Premier and our Chief Medical Officer, Jeannette Young.

The decision to delegate responsibility to our CMO and her acceptance of that responsibility for the duration of this pandemic however long that may take is one we should embrace. She presents as calm, professional and knowledgeable.

If we look at America and at who is stepping up to lead their country, we should be immensely grateful.

Considering that with a population of 5.071m, 1.621m tests performed and only 6 deaths, we can definitely say that Queensland's response has been immeasurably better than world class. That is 1 death per million of Queensland's population. This is surpassed only by Northern Territory who admittedly only have one twentieth of our population. Recently I spoke to UK citizens who report 1 death per street.

There are more than 20 countries worldwide recording deaths of more than 1000 deaths per million. The majority of our citizens and business have no comprehension of just how bad this is overseas and how bad this can get if there is a total breakdown of the social fabric. Something countries like the UK may yet see.

For all the naysayers and critics, we should applaud our Queensland Government's response in achieving a rate of 1 death per million. When the other States achieve this, they can afford to be critical.

We have not had any debacles such as mass disembarking from ships or flights and major breaches of quarantine. That is more than can be said for some states. While every decision made in such a role is not always the right one, we must also respect that anyone who makes many decisions will inevitably make one that does not have the right outcome. There are some case however that have us saying "They did what!"

The only decisions made in Queensland that I have an issue with are:

- 1 Where a lockdown is scheduled to commence 26 hours into the future.
 Witnessing the irrational public response of those fleeing the area before it becomes mandatory is soul destroying". Our public's response should be "I will do what needs to be done before I am forced to do it. I will stay at home and only go out for what is really essential. I will wear a mask now already because it is the right thing to do" Instead it's like stirring a hornet's nest and all and sundry buzz all over the place uncontrollably without masks because it is not mandatory yet. Must go and get some library books and a dozen beers and toilet paper to see me through. Got to get up the coast even if it means taking this virus with me. Evidence of some people's irrationality is evidenced by those who declared the curtains would fade if we brought in daylight saving.

I would like to see instantaneous lockdowns and then working through the problems that brings with it, rather than ignoring the most critical phase because it raises too many problems. If you are in transit and there is a snap lockdown, that's tough but everyone is aware by now of the risk of travel and can expect quarantine if circumstances change. The longer a fire is left to burn the greater the response ultimately needs to be. We don't postpone action on putting a fire out so that we have time to get our library books first.

- 2 8 hour queues for Covid testing
 Having citizens queueing for 8 hours to obtain a Covid test is not acceptable. Testing should be by appointment so that citizens are allocated a time to present at the testing site. This would cut down enormously on fuel wastage if in cars or public interaction and exposure where people are lined up standing outside. Particularly as this is summertime, we may yet see a spike in skin cancer cases from extended sun exposure. This is a particularly serious issue where young children are obliged to stand in the sun for long periods. Few parents appear to have the foresight to bring an umbrella for shade.
 To this end, making an appointment must be easy and seamless and the actual visit for a test should not be unduly shown as uncomfortable. The media is great at depicting those wincing at merely having a swab taken.
 This is sensationalism for financial gain and should be deplored.

There are those who have vested interests in areas such as tourism travel. This is big business blustering, trying to influence politicians into doing what should not be done. While admittedly they are suffering financially they are advocating action that is a conflict of interests. They will be the first to line up for support and protection while ignoring the potential suffering of others. Me first - a little like the Titanic.

There is little point having an engineer design a bridge girder only to have the design watered down by those not expert in that discipline purely so that they can support their lavish lifestyle. Big business may be expert in feathering their own nest, however they generally show little regard for those who are integral to their livelihood. There are grave consequences to being influenced by self-interests.

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