

Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2020

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Good afternoon

There is no need to extend any provisions relating to COVID virus. The Chief Health Officer (CHO) should not be representing the government in regard to matters of legislation. Legislation is a matter for the government, who are duly elected to represent the will of the people.

Democracy has been lost as the decisions are clearly not being made by an elected representative. The CHO and the Premier have both clearly stated on many occasions that the only instructions being enforced on Australian Citizens residing in Queensland are issued by the CHO. These directions are currently issued via quasi written instruments from an unelected public servant who at the moment is not subjected to the oversight of the Parliament (are being issued by a public servant and not the parliament, advice being taken is the CHO.)

Taking aside, the will of the people has been ignored by elected representatives, public sector employees are there to provide advice, allegedly representing a wide range of ideas for which the appropriate minister or people's elected representative can make a judgement call about a situation.

Under the Westminster system of Parliament directions being issued by the CHO should by rights be issued as a regulation which has been scrutinised by the Parliament decisions should be made by an elected representative and this is how the Premier should represent the decisions; not delivered by a person who was not elected to represent the government.

The government clearly lacks a vision and a plan to take the state forward. Knee jerk reactions are the 'règle du jour' of the government based on the bias of the Chief Health Officer. Government should have a plan and a vision and stick to the plan, with the usual review as events unfold. If the CHO continues to make these decisions, without proper planning then the chaos that is currently in existence in this state, will continue. The chaos I refer (and this is just one example) to is the decision by the CHO to lockdown the state for a long weekend because of one case of COVID. The reasoning to do the contact tracing. Surely nearly 12 months of contact tracing, should see a fairly robust system in place that does not require people being held as 'hostages'.

The contact tracing is also poorly put in place. This would be the responsibility of the CHO. When investigating where people have been and what they are doing they need trained investigators to do the work; not health officials. The incompetence of the health contact tracers has been evident in the mistakes that they have made in accusing people of being COVID infected when they were not. The lack of co-operation of people who refuse to share contact details or lie about their movements means that these matters do not belong in the hands of the CHO, it needs a broader and more detailed plan to ensure effective use of resources, which if this had been acted on in the first place, would not have resulted in more knee jerk reactions regarding social distancing, shutting down businesses and generally frightening of the community.

The above is one example of poor decision making by the CHO. I should mention, singers, football players, movie stars and endless others who because of their wealth have been exemptions. This is inconsistent decision making which is clearly putting the state at risk

economically and emotionally through poor mental health as well as the population generally being disgruntled with the government and their lack of action, are all decisions made by the by CHO.

Every time a decision is randomly made by the CHO about shutting borders the economic hurt grows. No one would be prepared to make a decision about going on a holiday if they cannot be assured that they will actually have the holiday and to be able to return home without individual economic loss. I suspect the tourism industry in Queensland is probably thinking the same thing!

The lack of COVID in the community clearly indicates that it is time for the CHO to step aside and let elected representatives do their job ie making the decisions about the direction of the government and the progress of the community.

Allegedly this is all being done to keep us safe. There is more to safety than being healthy. The car accidents, deaths resulting from car accidents, car jackings, murders and assaults are also an issue at this time. If the CHO keeps making decisions which take police and security away from our community, to use in policing people not wearing masks or staying home or not congregating, this means that crimes are not having the resources allocated to them that they need to ensure an outcome for all parties. There is minimal proactive work being done to minimise harm and/or to raise awareness of crimes ie fewer patrols within suburbs or longer lead times to solve problems. The mental anguish of a victim of crime cannot be understated.

The language and the emotion of the CHO in press conferences and interviews that is frightening and terrifying ignorant and vulnerable people and unnecessarily patronising. (Taking aside the Premier is also patronising in their language use.) A non-elected representative who is an employee of the government is not meant to speak to the press and there are strict guidelines about who should be representing the government and how they should represent the government.

The COVID situation doesn't need more medical information or advice. Any directions that are issued by the CHO should go before a standing committee of parliament who have the authority to issued the direction as a regulation from the parliament. Ultimately the person responsible should be the Minister for Health and the Premier, not a senior public servant.