




Speech By  
**Shane Knuth**

**MEMBER FOR HILL**

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Record of Proceedings, 30 March 2022

**PUBLIC HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION (EXTENSION OF EXPIRING PROVISIONS) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (12.39 pm): I rise today to speak against the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill. The bill will extend the government's and the Chief Health Officer's unlimited and godlike pandemic powers until 31 October including the likely continuation of the disgraceful vaccine mandate, or what I prefer to call segregation policy. The bill now gives the government unchallenged powers—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr KNUTH:** They love that, don't they? The bill now gives the government unchallenged powers to continue to exclude those who are unvaccinated from our society and force a third vaccination shot on our frontline workers. In my 18 years of parliament I have never seen a more destructive abuse of powers that segregates and marginalises a section of our society than this bill allows. It is incredible—

**Mr Saunders** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Member for Maryborough, you were on a warning. You can leave the chamber for one hour under standing order 253A.

*Whereupon the honourable member for Maryborough withdrew from the chamber at 12.40 pm.*

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members on my right, the member for Hill has a right to be heard.

**Mr KNUTH:** It is incredible that the committee recommended the passing of the bill despite over 1,700 submissions against it, including from the Queensland Human Rights Commission and the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties. The government is always quick to point out the support of organisations such as the Human Rights Commission and the Council for Civil Liberties for legislation when it suits them but it has disregarded their advice to not pass this bill. For those members who have not read both these submissions, it is worthwhile me reading some extracts. The Queensland Council for Civil Liberties state—

It is for the government to justify the continuation of these emergency powers.

In our view, statements made by the health minister in her speech when tabling the bill do not justify a continuation of the emergency powers. That is not coming from the member for Hill; that is coming from the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties. It goes on—

The government's repeated failures to provide a set of criteria by which it will decide to end the emergency other than a criterion which must result in it continuing so long as the virus is circulating in the community, must lead one to conclude that the government will keep the emergency powers for as long as it likes.

This is an important point. The vaccination rate has stabilised at 91.7 per cent, yet the mandate remains in place. Why are they continuing with this policy? Their submission goes on to say—

... these are the most Draconian powers that have ever existed in Queensland, including in wartime.

That is not me saying that; it is the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties. I will say it again—

... these are the most Draconian powers that have ever existed in Queensland, including in wartime. ... This is entirely unacceptable because it represents a clear and present danger to our civil liberties.

...

... people are being deprived of a chunk of their lives which they will never get back.

I table that submission.

*Tabled paper:* Submission No. 962, dated 4 March 2022, by the President, Queensland Council for Civil Liberties, Mr Michael Cope, to the Community Support and Services Committee's inquiry into the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022 [447](#).

The Queensland Human Rights Commission submission states—

As a community, we have learnt about the impacts of quarantining conditions on people's mental health, the human rights limitations arising from public health directions that confine people to their homes and the mandating of vaccines. Powers imposing such significant human rights limitations cannot continue without proper oversight, transparency and external review.

I table the Human Rights Commission submission.

*Tabled paper:* Submission No. 970, dated 4 March 2022, by the Queensland Human Rights Commission, to the Community Support and Services Committee's inquiry into the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022 [448](#).

These are highly regarded organisations whose advice the government has completely ignored now that it does not suit them. Even the Newman government, who declared war on everybody, were angels compared to this government. I also have grave fears about the committee process. The committee has also completely ignored the overwhelming evidence, testimony and submissions against the bill and has basically rubberstamped the government's obsession with continuing this unprecedented abuse of power. The reality is it makes no sense to extend these powers and we cannot continue to operate in this environment. The damage that this bill and the mandate has caused to small business and frontline health and education workers will take years to recover from.

The mental health issues that have arisen because of these powers and the mandate will have far-reaching and long-term impacts on all Queenslanders and our already struggling health system. It is disgraceful that none of this has been taken into account and it is plain to see that this policy is not based on medical evidence but is purely politically driven.

More and more countries around the world are abandoning the vaccine mandates, including the announcement last week that New Zealand will follow suit. This is despite an average of 17,000 new infections being reported each day in New Zealand. What does the government do? Despite us having one of the highest vaccination rates in the world, they extend the Chief Health Officer's powers and continue the vaccination mandate until 31 October and from then who knows when? That is because we have a state government that is drunk on power. Questions have to be asked about the scare campaigns used by powerful—

**Ms PUGH:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It is unparliamentary language. I would like the member to withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I will take some advice. Thank you for your point of order, member for Mount Ommaney. I am advised there was not any unparliamentary language used. However, member for Hill, if you want to withdraw it that might help.

**Mr KNUTH:** I withdraw. Questions have to be asked about the scare campaign used by powerful global pharmaceutical companies and how this could influence governments in continuing vaccination mandates. It has been reported that Pfizer is making enormous profits from COVID, earning nearly \$51 billion in sales from its COVID-19 vaccine in 2021 and projecting \$75 billion in sales during 2022. I table this article.

*Tabled paper:* Email, dated 16 March 2022, from the Hill Electorate Office regarding an article from the *Courier-Mail* titled 'Dr Nick Coatsworth reacts to Pfizer's claim most people will need four doses of the Covid vaccine' [449](#).

It is certainly in the best interests of these pharmaceutical giants, health organisations and governments to continue the vaccine mandate. This government initially told Queenslanders they would be protected from COVID by double vaccination. Then they told us we would require a third shot to be 'truly safe'. Now we are told to have a fourth shot, which may be required by the end of the year, and then we will be 'truly, truly safe'. The goalposts keep being shifted by this government and it is no wonder there is anger and mistrust in the general community towards this government.

The vaccine mandate commenced in Queensland on 17 December 2021 when there was a total of 2,227 cases and a fully vaccinated status of 83.6 per cent. When they brought in the mandates there were 2,227 cases across Queensland. As at 29 March 2022 total COVID cases in this state had jumped to over 747,000 cases with a fully vaccinated status of 91.7 per cent. Since the mandate started, Queensland has averaged 7,327 new cases per day. During this same period the number of those who are unvaccinated in the state has fallen, from 16.4 per cent to 8.3 per cent, yet we have recorded 745,000 new cases. My point is we have exiled the unvaccinated from society and restricted their movements, yet COVID has rapidly spread through the state, so who is spreading the virus?

It is very clear that the spread of the virus does not discriminate between those who are vaccinated and those who are not. This data clearly shows the mandate was a complete waste of time and has made zero difference in stopping the spread of COVID throughout the state. The government will argue that removing the mandate will increase hospitalisations, as mentioned previously, of those who are unvaccinated. In fact, it is the government that has worsened the state's health system by standing down 4,000 of our most highly trained health workers when the mandate was introduced. We have also lost specialised staff in aged care and home care services, which has left many of our sick, our elderly and our disabled helpless.

A massive amount of resources have been wasted in policing businesses, cafes, pubs and takeaways to enforce a mandate that is unnecessary, highly destructive and ineffective. Instead of extending the Chief Health Officer's vaccination mandate, we need to look after and focus on taking care of and protecting the sick, the frail, the disabled and our elderly. Make no mistake: everyone who votes to support this bill is voting to destroy small business, destroy families and destroy communities. By mandating the vaccine, you are voting to destroy your lives. We oppose the bill.

*(Time expired)*