

I would like to introduce myself. I am a mother of [redacted] grown-up children, ranging in age from [redacted] old to [redacted] old. I have been working as a teacher's aid this year and will continue to do so next year as well as taking on a role of teaching some migrants English.

I understand that there is an inquiry into the COVID-19 Response and that it covers

- both the health and non-health responses
- responsibilities of the Commonwealth Government and the role of state and territory governments
- how national governance arrangements including National Cabinet, informed decisions by governments.

I will tackle these all under the one umbrella. I am particularly concerned about the COVID-19 Response by both the Federal Government as well as the State Governments mainly because the responses trampled over our human rights and God-given freedoms. In Australia, we have always prided ourselves on being a country that supports freedom of speech and that 'we are not like those other dictatorial countries which clamp down on people voicing their opinions'. And yet during the COVID-19, we became exactly like 'those other countries!'. Many people have fled other countries due to their oppressive regimes, and come to Australia seeking refuge, and yet we have ourselves have become an oppressive regime! And we are continuing to do so as the Federal Government is persistent in pushing their Misinformation and Disinformation Bill.

The other reason why I feel so strongly on this issue is because COVID-19 is not this life-threatening disease which needed these strong-arm tactics. It was blown out of all proportion. It is similar to the flu, and as such even today, when someone has got COVID, they are suggested to stay home, and it is treated as something you get over in a few days.

I feel that by totally exaggerating the dangers of COVID-19, it enabled Governments both Federal and State to use it as a vehicle by which they could take away our human rights, and they certainly did. Who would have believed that Australia would be a place where police shoot at its own people with rubber bullets for simply protesting! These people were not engaged in any illegal activity or crime, but were simply exercising their rights to say no in a peaceful protest.

The irony of the situation is that we still have people today dying from COVID-19, and yet we are not in lock-downs! We are going about our normal lives, and this is what we should have been able to do all along during this time. We think the COVID-19 pandemic existed from about March 2020 to somewhere around the end of 2021. However the 'pandemic' is still with us. It's just our response to it has changed and our response of isolating the sick, not the healthy is what we should have been doing all along.

On the Australian Bureau of Statistics website¹, there is an article called 'COVID-19 Mortality in Australia: Deaths registered until 30 September 2023'. Here is a copy of a table from that site.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/covid-19-mortality-australia-deaths-registered-until-30-september-2023>

Deaths due to COVID-19 by year and month of occurrence

Year of death	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	0	0	23	79	12	3	145	473	146	16	8	1
2021	2	1	1	2	0	0	13	98	316	443	260	219
2022	1,646	1,034	425	716	929	888	1,408	1,129	447	254	455	953
2023	741	226	258	422	622	579	319	147	61			

In Australia, we have had lockdowns in Sydney and Melbourne. In Melbourne, we had 6 lock-downs and they were from March 2020 to October 2021. If we notice that after the lockdowns were lifted, we have had more people dying from COVID-19, and yet we are going about doing our business and educating our young people, and living with COVID-19, like we should have been doing from the very start.

My recommendations to improve Australia's preparedness for future pandemics is that we follow the science, not the money. Science is about hearing a range of opinions and collectively working out a solution. Science is not about purposely squashing an alternate view just because it differs to ours.

However, where money and control are concerned, that is when opposing views are squashed and trampled on.

My recommendations are as follows:

1. Do not allow the World Health Organization to dictate to Australia what it should or should not do in a pandemic. We are a sovereign state and by ceding to the WHO, we are giving away our right to manage ourselves.
2. We should determine if there are any biases going on with the people who are making major decisions, ie are people or organizations being paid to support a certain viewpoint?
3. Make sure that freedom of speech is always deemed as of the highest importance.

George Orwell, in his book, 1984, wrote it as a warning against totalitarian governments. With these governments, they control people's minds and thoughts through propaganda and they suppress their people through constant surveillance. Unfortunately under the excuse of COVID-19, the Australian government has shown total disregard for human rights and autonomy, and has caused us to start to go down the slippery slope towards totalitarianism. Is there enough push-back to stop this down-hill trend?

