

To whom it may concern:

I would like to present my submission to the Commonwealth Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry.

I will focus on 3 scopes

-Key health response measures :

-Governance

-International policies to support Australians at home and abroad

My name is [REDACTED] citizen of Australia [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I'm a qualified [REDACTED] and, at the time of COVID was working in the [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] both at work as part of the [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] and at home as a [REDACTED]

I do not represent anyone but myself.

-Key health response measures :

This in my opinion was by far the worst aspect.

The government approach (state, territory and federal) was uncoordinated, resulting in a patchwork of guidelines and instructions.

As an [REDACTED] volunteer, I attended emergencies hoping for the best and preparing for the worse. At the time, pre vaccine, all we had for protection was a disposable painter's overall, a face shield, copious amount of disinfectant and reassurances that we were protected.

As part of my [REDACTED] I had trained for chemical and bacteriological incidents with extremely strict protocols, wearing breathing apparatus and a positively pressured, fully enclosed suit with double gloves and taped over zippers or junctions.

Needless to say I didn't believe that I was safe from the virus as a [REDACTED] volunteer but I believed that my community needed assistance (all our [REDACTED] are volunteers where I live) and that someone had to do it. So I stuck around and kept doing my job.

I disagreed with the vaccine mandates on the basis of their authoritarianism and declined to be vaccinated.

I was dismissed from [REDACTED] shortly afterwards.

At the time, I still worked as a [REDACTED]

Basically me and a colleague driving 100s of kilometres in the countryside without seeing a soul

[REDACTED]

Vaccine mandate then applied to the transport industry and I was let go to “protect the public” that was nowhere to be seen in my line of work.

At the time I had written to the Prime Minister (Reference: MC21-141276) who had the audacity to claim that the vaccines were voluntary.

At the time, there was an outcry for the lack of [REDACTED] whilst I was trying to rebuild my life, unable to do either.

Perhaps those vaccines worked but if they did, the only one who was taking risks by not being vaccinated was myself.

By refusing to ban discrimination based on vaccine status, the federal government allowed discrimination and recrimination to run rampant country wide.

This must not happen again.

-Governance

As briefly mentioned in the paragraph above, the lack of a unified front and message country-wide was below par.

The way ATAGI refused to acknowledge that there were perhaps some risks associated with the vaccine and didn't give Australians the information required for their informed consent or that AHPRA issued gag orders to any medical professional who voiced any doubt over the government's message was disgraceful.

In a democracy, citizens are meant to be informed not coerced. Debate can then be held instead of being repressed and finally a consensus can be reached instead of being imposed.

In the future, I believe this should be remembered.

-International policies to support Australians at home and abroad

Finally, in regards to the international policies, I cannot say that this was any better than the other scopes addressed above.

At the beginning of the pandemic, Australian overseas were told to stay where they were only to find themselves stuck abroad when the government closed the borders without notice.

For those of us in Australia with family overseas (which I imagine is a fairly wide percentage of the population), border closure meant missing out on family matters such as a death, marriages, birth for years whilst witnessing borders being opened for celebrities or sportsmen.

Even between states and territories, there were heart breaking stories of people missing out on funerals whilst bureaucrats assessed applications on flawed applications such as G2G

Conclusion :

With the benefit of hindsight, I think it is now safe to say that the covid pandemic wasn't as bad as we all feared it was (unless you were frail, old and/or with multiple comorbidities) and I genuinely believe that the government response caused infinitely more harm to our society as a whole than this pandemic could ever have.

Despite being over, we keep paying the price with a raging inflation, an excess death of unknown causes (+13% for the first 6 months of 2022 according to the Australia Bureau of Statistics) and a divided society.

As a closing statement, a quote from Mr Reagan comes to mind :



As a citizen, I considered the covid response deeply flawed in many ways.

As a volunteer  I felt betrayed.

May we learn from it and ensure this never happens again,