

COVID-19 Response Inquiry - Submission

Date: 15 December 2023

My background

I am a retired business analyst, born and bred in Melbourne. I'm devastated by the way my once beautiful city has been laid waste, and I am determined to see justice delivered.

Terms of reference

I would like the Inquiry to note my dissatisfaction with the Terms of Reference, in that the scope should include actions taken by state governments, whether unilateral or not. In addition, the Inquiry ought to have the status of a full Royal Commission, given the devastation the government responses to an airborne virus have caused, and continue to cause, in the lives of ordinary, law-abiding, innocent citizens. Anything less risks being a whitewash.

My submission to the COVID-19 Response Inquiry best fits with the Governance area of the Terms of Reference.

Among the questions I would like answered:

1. What happened to existing pandemic plans?

Victoria, and all other jurisdictions, had well thought out plans for what to do in the event of a pandemic. Why were they abandoned? [This book](#) by [REDACTED] should be required reading by those conducting the inquiry.

2. Where were our human rights?

Why was the Australian Human Rights Commission silent when Victorian citizens [were locked in their Housing Commission flats without notice](#)? The Victorian government has settled a class action lawsuit on this matter. What or who influenced the AHRC non-action? How is it that such actions by governments have no effective, timely mechanisms by which they might be halted?

3. Why did the government see fit to create the National Cabinet?

What special character or power did the National Cabinet have that could not have been found in any existing body, like the Cabinet or the Parliament? Why were the proceedings not televised like sessions of parliament? Who else was present in the sessions? Were there representatives of the Intelligence services, from Australia or other countries? When will we see full lists of attendees, and full transcripts of everything that went on?

4. What happened to medical ethics?

How did it transpire that the government permitted employers to insist that staff submit to a medical procedure? How many written and unwritten rules and codes of conduct were pushed aside to let this happen? What checks and balances are in place to stop it happening again?

5. How was government messaging shaped?

To what extent were advisory bodies created or engaged to finalise the types of government ads we saw on TV and the newspapers? Were teams of psychologists consulted for the best ways to ██████████ up fear? Was censorship of dissenting voices an explicit or implicit expectation of social media at the direction of the government? Was government advertising indirectly influencing the types of stories that mainstream media ran? This book '[A State of Fear: How the UK government weaponised fear during the Covid-19 pandemic](#)' by Laura Dodsworth should be required reading for the members of the inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Richard Kelly