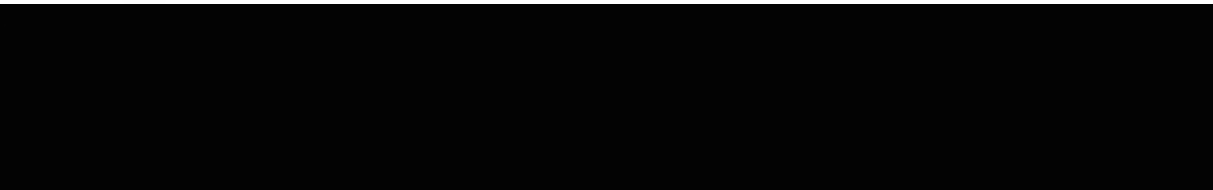


Relevant terms of reference:

- Governance including the role of the Commonwealth Government, responsibilities of state and territory governments, national governance mechanisms (such as National Cabinet, the National Coordination Mechanism and the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee) and advisory bodies supporting responses to COVID-19.
- Key health response measures (for example across COVID-19 vaccinations and treatments, key medical supplies such as personal protective equipment, quarantine facilities, and public health messaging).

Submission:

On the 21 February 2021, the eve of the Covid-19 vaccine rollout in Australia, the former Minister of Health, Greg Hunt said:



That is exactly right. It was a clinical trial. And yet the “message to the public” was an utter misrepresentation of that fact.

The vaccines were acknowledged to be a trial medical procedure on which a global collection of data was taking place. It's safety and effectiveness to protect was unknown and therefore no one should have been coerced to take them. The vaccines were not designed to prevent infection and transmission and, therefore, vaccine mandates were never justified. Access to work, restaurants, cinemas, restaurants, hairdressers, Bunnings and Officeworks (for goodness' sake), in fact, any public space open to the public should never have depended upon vaccine status.

The Federal Government has and continues to push responsibility of vaccine mandates onto state governments, as evidenced by the limited scope of this inquiry which refuses to consider actions that fell under the jurisdiction of states. However, the Federal Government had numerous opportunities to denounce and prevent discrimination on the basis of medical choice. But it failed to do so. It sat on its hands, made empty statements about how vaccines were “voluntary” and in doing so, effectively, endorsed medical discrimination and failed to uphold the requirement for valid consent in its own Australian Immunisation Handbook.²

As an immigrant to Australia since childhood, I had always believed that I was lucky to be in Australia. Australia was a fair country. A country that stood up for what was right. A country of integrity. A country worthy of setting an example on the world stage. Sadly, the Australian response to the Covid-19 pandemic has been a rude awakening for me. I now whole-heartedly believe Australia is a backwards country.

In comparison, I refer to the example of Japan. The message put out by the Japanese government, and published by its Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare on its website, was:

“Please get vaccinated of your own decision, understanding both the effectiveness in preventing infectious diseases and the risk of side effects. No vaccination will be given without consent. Please do not force anyone in your workplace or those who around you to be vaccinated, and do not discriminate against those who have not been vaccinated.”³

¹ <https://www.greghunt.com.au/interview-with-david-speers-insiders-abc/>

² <https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/>

³ <https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/covid-19/vaccine.html>

In addition, its Ministry of Justice actively encouraged, on its website, for the public to contact them for advice if they had been discriminated against.⁴

Japan and Australia rolled out the same vaccines. The same vaccines which, I repeat, were not designed to stop infection or transmission. The messaging in Japan was one of understanding, compassion and logic. But the messaging from the Australian Government was cruel, indifferent, unethical, divisive, illogical.

Australia, you have lost my trust. Australia, you have a lot to answer for.

⁴ <https://www.moj.go.jp/content/001281977.pdf>