

Failure of the government to apply cost benefit principles in its response to Covid-19

Overall the government failed to apply cost benefit principles to the response. For example, we know that the cost of lockdown policies far outweighed any benefits (██████ 2022). In 2020 many prominent epidemiologists stated that lockdowns would cause more harm than good but were ignored. In developing *Australia's Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza*, lockdowns were considered and rejected because they cause more harm than good. The strongly age stratified effect of Covid-19 meant that school and working aged people were at little risk and should have continued life as normal. Support should have been provided for the elderly and vulnerable to mitigate risk only.

PCR testing was also an extravagant waste of money. The PCR testing system cost the Australian government \$3.7 billion up until early 2022. This was a misuse of PCR tests which do not indicate infection or infectiousness. Confirmatory PCR tests will deliver positive results in individuals with previous resolved infections, new infections, and potential re-infections, as well as false positives in people genuinely not harbouring the virus (around 0.8% of all tests performed). Real concern exists that many people who are not infectious (and not likely to become infectious) will receive positive test results, and together with their contacts, will be forced to isolate unnecessarily. In the context of mass surveillance, this could be a majority of those who test positive. Using PCR for population screening—even with a lower maximum Ct value cut off—is not epidemiologically sound.

There was also the damage to peoples health and mental health from

- Being confined to their homes in some cases with abusers
- not being able to see friends and family
- stress of not being able to open their business
- being too scared or unable to attend to medical issues
- not being able to attend funerals of loved ones
- care home residents isolated and neglected

The lockdowns were cruel and unnecessary. While care needed to be taken to protect the elderly and vulnerable, Covid did not pose a high risk to most of the population and this was known very early in the pandemic. The very low risk of respiratory viruses spreading when people are outdoors was also known. People should have been encouraged to get out in the sunshine and exercise and instead they were told to stay indoors under threat of arrest and fines.

I know of numerous people whose elective surgery was delayed in most cases for no good reason. One of these was a lady who had a ██████████. Due to long delays in her surgery she is now ██████████. Another was a child whose surgery delay caused ██████████ which will likely affect her for many years. Both of these cases were in ██████████ where hospitals were under no threat of being overwhelmed with covid patients.

That our supposed experts in health instituted such ill informed measures undermines any authority they have.

With regard to the role of the Commonwealth Government in National cabinet it should have coordinated a national response with the states. State by state responses were damaging and disruptive to business and people. People living in border communities had their schooling, work and personal lives disrupted. Keeping up with constantly changing directives and requirements was very difficult. I've never seen our country so divided.

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).

Overall public health messaging was inaccurate and designed to instil fear and so compliance rather than being informative. In future public health officials should stick to presenting the facts and allow the public to interpret and apply them.

Misinformation from public health officials undermines community trust and induced undue fear in most of the public. Examples include pretending asymptomatic spread was significant, reporting deaths from other causes as "covid deaths" to inflate the perception of covid-19 as having a far higher mortality rate and pretending young people were at risk of covid-19. The use of fear to gain compliance likely caused ongoing mental health issues that will cause more harm than the virus itself.

The vaccinations were also a costly, damaging and divisive. The principle in vaccine development has been that extreme care is taken to ensure there are no unforeseen side effects as vaccines are given to otherwise healthy people. This was ignored with the covid vaccines. The TGA in Australia was negligent in its approval of and lack of follow up on the use of the vaccines. Emergency use authorisation should have been provided for those people with high risk of adverse outcomes from Covid only. There was not justification for authorising the use of an experimental vaccine on most of the Australian population. As an example the risks of heart injury in young people were identified early on, yet the vaccines continued to be authorised and recommended when young people were at extremely low risk from covid. This has again undermined public trust in the TGA and vaccines generally.

As the TGA did no testing of its own on the vaccines, there should have been follow up of every person vaccinated early on as a precautionary measure. Once the risks of myo and pericarditis were identified, the use of vaccines in anyone at low risk should have been halted.

Better targeting future responses should focus on risk and benefit. Public health agencies should be scrupulously honest in their messaging. Responses should be informed by the facts and the government should refrain from indulging in hysteria as well as inducing hysteria in the public.

The outcome of government actions has in my opinion done far more harm than the virus itself. We have many people with ongoing mental health issues, children behind in their education, billions of dollars of debt, inflation and a lack of trust in public institutions. There is a lot of work to be done to regain trust and a belief that we have competent people running the country.