

I am writing a submission as a member of the public, who like millions of other Australian citizens was impacted by the government's response to the covid-19 pandemic. It was announced an inquiry into Australia's response would not have the scope of a Royal Commission and I was immediately dismayed and disappointed. The pandemic was described as a "once in a lifetime event" and as such its response requires a review of equal depth and consequence.

Australia had an existing pandemic response developed for this exact scenario and it was not followed, this alone requires further investigation. A pandemic had been expected and planned for and the government abandoned the very document that outlined a well-considered and measured response. In fact, the government actions were in contravention to the plan, taking actions that the plan outlined *would not work*! The Australian people would like to know who made the decision not to implement the plan? I draw your attention to Sweden who did not follow the same measures as Australia and had better outcomes for their citizens without the social, psychological and financial costs. Sweden followed their pandemic plan.

A Royal Commission is required to examine the role of "independent" agencies, advisors and stakeholders for conflicts of interest during the course of the pandemic response. Choices in relation to testing, equipment (PPE etc) and most significantly vaccines need to be examined and what role these conflict of interests played in the purchasing, use and prioritising. For example, why wasn't an Australian vaccine prioritised over the purchase of millions of doses from overseas interests? Given that Australian tax payers are footing the bill for covid-19, surely an Australian vaccine producer could have been supported and expedited, as in the case of Vaxine and Professor Petrovsky.

Further to this, the contracts for vaccine procurement need to be made public. Questions need to be asked about the large number of doses purchased which far exceed the number of people in Australia as well as the recommended dosage. Why was this gross over purchase approved, subsequently resulting in millions of tax payer money squandered. It speaks to the above point, where overseas interests benefit at the expense of average Australians. Why were the contracts secret to begin with? It is a public health issue and government have a responsibility to report on such matters transparently and this was not done – why?

The inquiry will only be examining the role of the Commonwealth Government responsibilities and the role the National Cabinet had in management of the pandemic. I would suggest this is also vastly inadequate as it was the States who imposed vaccine and mask mandates and lockdowns. To only look at the actions of the government at a federal level effectively gives the States a free pass. Throughout the pandemic, Scott Morrison stated vaccination was *voluntary*, completely ignoring the reality and effectively abrogating the federal government of moral and all responsibility for such decisions. It was offensive and condescending. The federal government did nothing to protect Australian citizens from the actions of the state, they could have done this with the introduction of fair work laws but it was never done. All levels of government responses need to be examined, including the interplay between the federal and state government decision making.

The key health responses (vaccination, PPE and public health messaging) requires a Royal Commission in order to provide real and serious consequences can be enforced. There was a significant breakdown in public health messaging in which a calm, measured and balanced coverage was missing. Experts who had been titans in their fields were silenced because it went against the government narrative. This is not how the public can make informed health

choices! Respectful open debate used to be valued and a core principle in robust decision making, this was glaring in its absence during the pandemic. Any discussion or questions were dismissed and demonized as “mis / disinformation” even when coming from a genuine desire to understand more fully.

Science stops being science when you can't ask questions and Australians were being asked to accept only one narrative and this was worrying, disturbing, destructive, undemocratic. This meant people were forced to seek out alternate media for further information and this was actively censored and/ ridiculed along with anyone who chose to read it. The mainstream media were complicit in this, running only stories that fit with the government narrative and declining to provide a platform to any other *credible and highly knowledgeable* experts. To add insult to injury, a lot of what was previously reported and labelled as “mis / disinformation” has been revealed as true and accurate! Imagine how different the response would have been had the normal approach to science had been adhered to and debate had taken place? The decision making would have been better informed and robust.

ATAGI, the TGA and AHPRA's role in the pandemic must also be examined. Did these agencies do the work without fear or favour? Were they really independent? There were cases of doctors who were stripped of their credentials for speaking against vaccination, with all doctors provided a narrative to patients regarding vaccination. How can doctors meet their obligation to provide patient specific advice when gagged and not allowed to discuss possible adverse events from covid vaccines? How can a patient make an informed choice about their own health in consultation with their doctor when the doctor is silenced? Doctors who wanted to speak out saw colleagues careers and livelihoods destroyed. How can anything *but* a Royal Commission be acceptable when considering this factor alone?

The damage done by the government's response to the pandemic has been widespread, created trauma that will affect beyond this generation. The impact on our children's schooling, social, emotional and psychological wellbeing is unforgivable. Decisions were made to lock children out of school despite the evidence showing young people were not significantly impacted by covid. The stats showed older people were most at risk yet we locked everyone else up and created a bigger problem. We are social creatures, not meant to be apart from each other, we do better together, young and old and the damage caused by lockdowns was immeasurable and unjustifiable.

Much is made of the stats and deaths etc however I note at each 11am press conference, the numbers were the focus. All this did was feed into the fear mongering and push the vaccination agenda. Numbers of death were not separated by who died *with* covid and *from* covid, a significant difference that would have opened the discussion for other avenues to protect Australians. Why didn't the Health department ever speak of co-morbidities and how a focus on good general health could be protective? It would have been fair, just and respectful to provide Australians this information so that they may assess their own risk, after all they are aware of their own health status and make decisions about vaccination from there.

I note the scope of the inquiry does not cover international programs etc and believe this may have something to do with the WHO recommendations..? This would fall within an examination of a federal response so not sure why it is not being reviewed? The WHO recommendations were used as part of the justification for the measures implemented and especially as they seek to have closer influence and powers over future pandemic responses?

There needs to be accountability for the covid response. We are being told there is another pandemic coming so it is just logical that we would *thoroughly* examine our response to this one so we *can do better and less harm!* Health decisions should be made with all the available information, review and reflection is part of good scientific method. Different voices are an integral necessary part of this process. Experts from all sides of the spectrum should be included in this review, that is how we learn to do better.