

To the members of the Independent Panel into the Covid-19 Inquiry,

I am a West Australian mother of five, and I am writing this submission to express my concern about the government's Covid-19 pandemic response.

I am opposed to the removal of our freedoms by governments in the form of mask mandates, vaccine mandates, lockdowns and curfews. I also feel strongly that we deserve a genuine Covid inquiry that will investigate all aspects of how the 'pandemic' was managed.

I experienced the government's response to be an example of extreme government overreach. It was preceded by a dishonest campaign of fear through the media and government channels. The communication and messaging that deliberately created fear in the community was unethical and highly problematic. It created disturbance and division in the community, and it was a manipulative exercise to gain public attention, acquiescence and compliance. This exercise in sustained community fear-mongering and manipulation was an abuse of trust; the ongoing consequences of such will be in naturally, at an individual and community level, reduced – indeed, significantly lost – trust, in public messaging, as well as scepticism in and distrust of the cooperation of public institutions with each other: this will now be more likely to be interpreted as being in order to cynically control the population.

I personally have experienced psychological harm from the unprecedented and alarming removal of freedoms during the government response to the Covid 19 saga. What was much more concerning, distressing and alarming to my family and me, than the possibility of contracting the Covid 19 virus itself, was in fact the removal of democratic rights and freedoms, under the guise/justification of 'pandemic management.'

Living in a free and democratic country should mean that those rights and freedoms are non-negotiable, and that there should be no fear, no need, reason or attempted justification of the 'temporary' removal of those freedoms, even in the event of a public health 'crisis.' The government, the elected members, are there to serve and represent the people; not become instruments of authoritarian control and fear over them. This was in fact, such a shocking overstep, and a betrayal of all those living in a supposed 'liberal democracy'.

The raft of measures put into place during the response to the Covid 19 saga, were incoherent, contradictory, chaotic, emotionally motivated in response to fear, as well as irrational and non-sensical. For example, vaccines were mandated in WA and yet our premier stated that they were not. But holding someone's employment and source of income over them as to whether they get vaccinated is giving them no proper choice; it is a mandate. Likewise, locking members of the community out of that community if they are unvaccinated, and publicly labelling them with derogatory names through the media and press conferences, is divisive and bullying; it is coercive and forceful. These measures incited feelings of fear and isolation amongst the community, particularly amongst those members who had personal hesitations about receiving an untested and unproven 'vaccine', which had received emergency-use authorisation only.

A person's innate right to freely consent to, or choose, one's medical treatment should at all times be given the highest level of respect and protection by the government and rule-of-law that governs our country. What is so highly disturbing in this instance, is that not only was this right not respected or protected, but in this case concerning a medical treatment that had inadequate evidence behind it! It was truly an assault on the rights and freedoms of the citizens of this country.

Likewise, and further to the above assault on our freedom, privacy and liberty, were the invasive mask mandates; again, with no substantive base of evidence. Forcing people to cover their mouth and noses to conduct any public business was an outrage, and even more so as there exists to this day, no compelling evidence to support the use of masks in this way. Furthermore, it was divisive to the community, signalling with powerful imagery and attention to one's face, as to whether the person was 'falling in line' with the currently accepted public narrative or not. The masks themselves became an instrument of fear and submission. People risked community shunning, as well as, shockingly, possible arrest, if they did not comply with covering their nose and mouth with a mask. This is notwithstanding, the already mentioned lack-of-supporting-evidence about such extreme measures, but in actual fact, sheer common sense, that covering one's respiratory organs with an obstruction that gathers bacteria and creates a poorly oxygenated, humid environment could never work for one's individual health, let alone that of the community.

As a personal anecdote in this, I was pregnant during the mask mandates. It should be common sense that a pregnant woman with already restricted oxygen and at higher risk of dizziness and nausea, headaches and other common pregnancy maladies, should not be required to wear a mask to conduct every-day business (I would emphasise that a pregnant woman nor anyone else for that matter). However, I was unable to obtain an exemption to the mask mandate from my GP or Obstetrician, both of whom refused to provide one. To me, this was utterly lacking in common sense – I and all other pregnant women were required to wear masks. It is just madness that pregnant women would be put at risk this way. And it also speaks to the fear and control that functioned over the medical profession, that these medical professionals were prepared to put the safety of their patients secondary to keeping in line with what they had clearly been ordered and pressured to do from 'above'.

I would further add that being pregnant and having a baby at the time of the government response measures to the Covid saga was a traumatic and deeply stressful experience. As mentioned, when pregnant (as well as after the baby was born), I was under continual pressure to wear masks, when it was not good for me or my baby, and also under pressure to take a 'vaccine' that was untested and lacking in safety evidence. I was concerned about this for myself and my baby. When the baby was born, I was in hospital under heavy restrictions, and was unable to receive adequate emotional support from my husband, due to inflexible, restricted and rigid visiting hours and conditions (my husband was often unable to visit during such restricted times which coincided with bedtime routines for our other children at home). I also found that due to widespread community fear, particularly amongst medical professionals, I was unable to receive adequate emotional care and support from these medical professionals during and after my pregnancy. The medical system became quite dysfunctional during this time, with the medical professionals and

system so intently focused on 'following Covid protocol', that effectively all meaningful holistic and person-centred care failed during this time. The effects of this for me are ongoing even to the current time, as I believe I have been scarred through this traumatic experience.

In regards to the above-mentioned human right, which should doubtless be an inalienable human right, to choose one's own medical treatment and freely consent to such, it was also highly disturbing that certain treatments were actually and in fact, banned, as part of the government's Covid response. The use of medicines such as Ivermectin were inexplicably forbidden for Covid 19. The entire focus was on the vaccine campaign, and such alternative treatments appeared to be seen by the government and the TGA as a threat to the vaccine campaign – despite the fact that many hardworking and dedicated doctors internationally were reporting early success with treatments such as Ivermectin. This is inexcusable in a liberal democracy such as what is purported to exist in Australia. This ban is highly likely to have led to adverse health effects, and even death, in persons who were denied this treatment option.

It is clear that a proper and true inquiry is required not only on a federal level but on a state level into the governmental response to the Covid 19 'pandemic', that such abuses of human rights and freedoms are never again repeated; for any reason or supposed 'justification.' For the good of the community, human rights and freedoms have always been part of our way of life in this country should never again be removed, disrespected or compromised. That is the higher principle; governmental health measures must always look to the good of the individual, and then the community. Whilst the federal government response is one line of inquiry that is worth being pursued, so indeed is the state government response, which enacted so many of these adverse responses and measures.

In conclusion then, this submission calls for human rights and freedoms to never again be sacrificed or pushed aside by the government in its response to any kind of 'public health situation' or indeed for any reason at all. It also calls for a proper and comprehensive investigation of the government's response at both a state and federal level. Finally, it calls for the establishment of uncompromising transparency and safeguarding of individuals' values and liberties.

Yours sincerely,

Bronwyn Muller