

COVID-19 Response Enquiry Submission

I paid keen attention to daily updates during the pandemic. I was pleased to live in NSW where at least a less draconian and panicked attitude was taken by the government and health officials. It seemed a measured and sensible approach. While I supported the measures taken by states to protect us all from catching the disease, like wearing masks when in company, washing hands, keeping a distance from everyone, I never thought a vaccine would become available because the time needed to test and approve one would take too long.

Therefore, when vaccines were suddenly available, I was not at all in support of the mass availability without any testing for effectiveness or side effects. Then the demand that everyone inject the unproven vaccine into their body was simply horrifying. The tone was threatening, intimidating and conjured [REDACTED] authoritarianism. I was prepared to stay out of society to avoid catching the virus, because I am autoimmune compromised. I've endured a protracted and difficult recovery from a virus that turned my immune system against myself. I'm reliably informed and educated on what is sensible, and I protect myself. Why would I want to subject myself to getting infected with a virus deliberately? My neurologist warned that I should never have a flu vaccine for instance because for me, it is a known cause of Guillain-Barre Syndrome and I would almost certainly have a reoccurrence and possibly more debilitating than the first episode. Bluntly, it could kill this time.

Autoimmune conditions are very severe and debilitating, robbing a person of ability to function, in my case causing [REDACTED] also impacting my family who have to look after me. Medical expenses mount, [REDACTED] which in turn cause other problems in your body – the repercussions are significant, adding to the cost on our health system. In many cases, permanent disability results, be it mild or severe. Knowingly injecting a vaccine in this situation then would have been and will always be, irresponsible.

My observation is that the health authorities during COVID, while admirably trying to control the virus spreading, treated anyone who did not want an unproven vaccine injected into their body, as a criminal. Public feeling was so intense, that I lived in fear of being "found out". With debility, you are already a target because you aren't "normal".

The health hierarchy and government leaders reacted just short of panicking although I do appreciate all they did to keep Australians safe. It was also irresponsible, especially for supposedly medical trained and educated people, to classify every single person in one all encompassing overview. This reveals incompetence by being unaware of the Australian population's diverse health issues. Vaccines should never be forcefully injected into people by inciting fear if they don't obey. Simple common sense needs to apply to the approach of forcing medication on people when they know it will be to their detriment. Medical science is finding now that auto immune conditions are much more prevalent today than even 10 years ago. It is an area that requires considered exploration so that our medical system can cope into the future with increased reliance by Australians.

Last word. I'm not against vaccinations. Much has been achieved to better our society by finding vaccines. I am against the regimented demand that all people must have them. If vaccines work, and I believe they do for many people, then those who have them need not fear the person beside them who cannot have a vaccine because they will suffer much worse by doing so. Someone who is auto immune compromised takes precautions to protect themselves every day. They take responsibility for themselves and keep informed because they care for their own health and safety.

Perhaps there is room in Australia for teaching common basics like personal responsibility for all aspects of our lives, consideration of others and being motivated to help yourself instead of always wanting someone else to do the work for us.

If you have not had, or known someone who has had an auto immune condition, it is likely you won't understand any of what I've just said. Experience is a harsh but effective teacher. There are also many more responsible citizens who don't scream loudly on social media. They just get on with living their lives and coping with what it throws at them.