

15 December 2023

TO: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

PO BOX 6500

Canberra, ACT 2600

RE: Commonwealth Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry

Dear Officer,

I am a health practitioner, with a background in Nursing, Midwifery, as well as Public Health. It is with these hats on that I want it to be stated that I was and still am, strongly opposed to the heavy-handed way our government handled and managed COVID-19. The measures that were taken were based on ridiculous forecasting and unsubstantiated risk profiles. Over the course of the multiple lockdowns and the vaccine mandate campaigns that were to follow, I had grave concerns for the wellbeing of our society. Lives were changed and we were asked to behave differently. This included at its worst, discrimination, medical apartheid, and at the least, the loss of work, proper education, or just being disconnected from the rest of society through means of social isolation. It is evident that these behaviour changes that were imposed were extremely harmful, and society will continue to feel for a long time the effects of these if left unchecked, and without due regard and attention.

I also speak as a mother, when I say that I never again want my kids to experience being part of a society that was so vehemently divided, or where they were targeted/bullied and discriminated for not having had a vaccine. It was absolutely disgusting the way that people were treated over the last few years, through social media and mainstream messaging, or just amongst families and friends that had divided views. The bullying techniques that were used are what I want the government to address and reflect on. Free-will, freedom of speech, and the agency to say 'no' is a basic human right; so what happened??

With all due respect, I truly believe that our government has stuffed up over the past few years. There was significant overreach, which is why I would fully endorse and support a Royal Commission into the government's management of COVID-19. In the meantime, though, I feel that a positive step in the right direction would be for the government to acknowledge at the local level that overreach occurred, and that an apology be given. Without this occurring, I believe that people's pain will never be validated, consequently eroding trust in our society, and those who were meant to lead us or represent us.

Lives have been lost, though not as a direct result of the virus, but rather through the management of it. Simple universal freedoms were denied to its citizens. I feel, as I am sure many others do, that there needs to be reassurance that this sort of thing will not happen again.

I also have a multitude of questions to ask, however I want to limit it to one because I never understood why these established measures were not followed.

Why did the Government not follow the *Biosecurity Act*, or the *Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza*, but rather departed from established public health principles for the management of COVID-19?

Thank you for your time.