



Hon Yvette D'Ath MP
Minister for Health and Ambulance Services
Leader of the House

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Mr Neil Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliament
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

24 MAR 2022

Dear Mr Laurie

I write in response to your letter regarding petition number 3658-21, tabled in Parliament on 22 February 2022, in relation to the request for the Queensland Government to open up more options to treat COVID-19.

Queensland's public hospital system provides world-class care to people suffering from COVID-19. Our clinicians are up-to-date with the most current treatment options for COVID-19, including new cutting-edge therapeutics as they are approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

However, the best approach to dealing COVID-19 is to ensure that people do not require hospital treatment in the first place. Our approach throughout 2020 and 2021 was to ensure that COVID-19 did not spread through the Queensland community, and to give every eligible Queenslanders the opportunity to be vaccinated.

This approach has proven successful, with community members enjoying higher levels of freedoms than most jurisdictions in Australia and overseas while maintaining one of the lowest morbidity and mortality rates in the world.

Our flexible response and tailored public health measures, including border restrictions, have protected Queenslanders and the Queensland economy from the significant public health, social and economic risks associated with large COVID-19 outbreaks. Lockdowns were used only in very few instances and for limited periods of time. Public health measures bought us time to ensure large parts of the population were vaccinated before the virus circulated widely in our community.

Throughout the pandemic, Queensland has worked under the principle that public health restrictions must only remain in place while they are reasonably needed to contain or reduce the spread of COVID-19. Thanks to our high vaccination coverage, the Queensland community is well-protected against severe outcomes.

Since late 2021, COVID-19 restrictions have gradually eased in line with the Queensland's COVID-19 Vaccine Plan to Unite Families. Queensland's borders have reopened to domestic and overseas arrivals and quarantine is no longer required for vaccinated persons.

From 4 March 2022, venues such as places of worship, community halls, gyms, universities, and hairdressers are no longer required to comply with capacity or density limits, regardless of vaccination status. All restrictions on home gatherings are lifted and masks are only required for vulnerable settings such as healthcare, aged care and disability accommodation services, while

someone is waiting for and travelling on public transport, taxis and ride share, and in airports and flights.

While vaccines and Omicron have changed the trajectory of COVID-related health outcomes, this does not mean the COVID-19 pandemic is over. COVID-19 is going to be with us for a long time and we can expect to see some degree of COVID-19 transmission for the foreseeable future.

Queensland's public health response remains flexible and adaptable to the circumstances, with waves of infection as well as any developments from emerging variants being managed as they arise according to the most up-to-date expert advice for COVID-19 protections.

As Queensland has done throughout the pandemic, public health measures will be continually reviewed in the context of whether the benefits they provide sufficiently outweigh the social and economic costs they may create, particularly where alternatives may exist.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely



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