



Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance
Services
Minister for Women

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C-ECTF-24/8525

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

Email: ClerksOffice@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Laurie

I write in response to your letter regarding petition number 4039-24, tabled in Parliament on 21 May 2024, in relation to a request for the medical advice relied upon by the Queensland Government during the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 presented many novel challenges that required an unprecedented response to protect the health of those living in Queensland. This response had two main phases: keeping the virus out of Queensland for as long as possible until a vaccine was developed and there were high levels of vaccination coverage across the community; and protecting those members of the community at highest risk.

As part of this response, Queensland's Chief Health Officer issued public health directions to manage the spread of COVID-19 throughout the community, including requirements for COVID-19 vaccination. In making these public health directions the Chief Health Officer relied on advice from a variety of sources.

Specifically, the Chief Health Officer met daily with doctors, epidemiologists, infectious diseases specialists and public health experts about COVID-19 and the extraordinary and emergency measures necessary to protect public health. Additionally, through the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee, the Chief Health Officer had regular discussions with Chief Health Officers from other jurisdictions about their responses to COVID-19.

In relation to safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccinations, the Chief Health Officer was guided by expert advice provided by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI), which is the national body that provides advice on the medical administration of vaccines in Australia.

Queensland's approach to the pandemic across the two phases saw the State achieve one of the lowest mortality rates from COVID-19 in the world, which is in large part due to the high vaccination rates across the community before the virus became widespread.

Even today, vaccination remains the best protection against COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. It is well documented that, in the first few months after vaccination, people are strongly protected against both mild and serious infection.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shannon Fentiman', with a stylized, flowing script.

Shannon Fentiman MP

Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services

Minister for Women

Member for Waterford