

19 March 2020

The Honourable Aaron Harper
Chair, Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee
Parliament House, Queensland 4000

Dear Mr Harper and Committee Members,

Re: Release of Inquiry Reports into Aged Care, End-of-Life and Palliative Care and Voluntary Assisted Dying

In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Palliative Care Queensland wish to put forward a recommendation that the Inquiry reports be delayed beyond the planned release on 31 March 2020.

Though we as an organisation are eager to read the Committee's reports, we are seeing high levels of panic in the community and media and, as a result, many important reports and initiatives that are not related to COVID-19 are (understandably) not being given the attention they would receive under normal conditions.

We believe that the Committee's reports detailing the findings of the Inquiry into Aged Care, End-of-Life and Palliative Care and Voluntary Assisted Dying are simply too important to be lost in the COVID-19 crisis.

Before COVID-19, we already noted that Queenslanders fear death and dying. Unfortunately, such fears and panic are being deepened by COVID-19. The public mindset has become characterised by fear. Reports that highlight Queensland health system and palliative care inadequacies may deepen this panicked mindset.

Instead, we need the Inquiry reports to be released when the time is right, when the reports can stimulate discussions that can ultimately lead to the transformation of palliative care and end-of-life care in Queensland.

For this reason, we suggest that the release of the reports be delayed until the public, health sector and government have the capacity to deeply engage with the findings of the Inquiry.

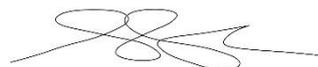
We continue to thank you and the Committee for the intensive and extensive work you have done on behalf of Queenslanders.

We appreciate your consideration of this letter and look forward to the delivery of the Inquiry reports, which we anticipate will point the way forward to transform care for all Queenslanders with life-limiting conditions.

Yours sincerely,



John Haberecht
President, Palliative Care Queensland



Shyla Mills
CEO, Palliative Care Queensland

CC: The Honourable Mark McArdle, MP | The Honourable Michael Berkman, MP | The Honourable Martin Hunt, MP |
The Honourable Barry O'Rourke, MP | The Honourable Joan Pease, MP | The Honourable Steven Miles, MP |
Mr Robert Hansen, Committee Secretary | Mr David Harmer, Queensland Health | Dr Robyn Brogan, Care at End of Life Project