



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

30 SEP 2022

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

Dear Mr Laurie

I write in response to petition number 3774-22, tabled in Parliament on 31 August 2022, in relation to the medical evidence supporting the use of face masks to limit the transmission of COVID-19.

Mask wearing is a widely adopted and accepted measure to slow the spread of COVID-19; having been routinely used as a complementary public health measure throughout Queensland's pandemic response. Wearing a mask can protect both the wearer from contracting the virus and from spreading the virus to others.

As Queensland experienced successive waves of Omicron transmission (BA.1 and BA.2) in the first half of 2022, mask requirements were in place for a wide range of indoor settings including workplaces, clubs and cafes, libraries and retail environments. Combined with Queensland's high level of COVID-19 vaccination coverage and other protective measures, these mask-wearing requirements helped to ensure that Queensland's hospital capacity was not overwhelmed during the first and second Omicron waves.

Since this time, broad mask requirements are no longer in place in Queensland, meaning individuals can make a personal choice about mask wearing. This was an important step down in the types of measures used to respond to the spread of COVID-19 as the community must be empowered to make individual decisions about how to manage the risk posed by COVID-19.

Where there is an increased public health risk mask wearing is still mandated under the public health directions. For example, the Chief Health Officer continues to mandate masks in settings where there is a higher risk of the spread of COVID-19. This includes in aged care facilities, hospitals and disability accommodation.

Whilst it is important for the community to move to self-managing COVID-19, the Chief Health Officer must still take all reasonable steps to ensure that the pandemic response is managing the highest risk aspects of the spread of COVID-19 within the community and mask wearing in the current settings assists in responding to that risk.

Mask wearing measures are only implemented when necessary and have always been promptly revoked in Queensland when they are no longer needed. As the petitioners may be aware, National Cabinet agreed, based on the health advice from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee, to revoke mask wearing requirements on domestic flights and Queensland has revoked this requirement as of 9 September 2022.

The Palaszczuk Government and Chief Health Officer always have the safety and wellbeing of Queenslanders at the forefront of considerations when implementing measures to respond to COVID-19 and this will continue to be the case into the future.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Yvette D'ATH". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "Y".

**YVETTE D'ATH MP**  
**Minister for Health and Ambulance Services**  
**Leader of the House**