

Inquiry into the Government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic

Mr Warren Howden

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YOUR SUBMISSION

Submission:

I am a primary school teacher and father of a 1 year old. The Victorian pandemic response has been devastating for my family and community. The response - not the pandemic.

I have seen countless students suffer from prolonged isolation and inadequate physical activity. One hour per day solo exercise is not a healthy alternative to children, who need social contact to motivate them to run around. I have seen the life drained out of faces that stare back through the screen at me, faces that I know to be vibrant, energetic, positive young people.

The greatest tragedy in this is that it was unnecessary to close primary schools at all. The updated research from the MCRI drew conclusions - that children under 12 do not spread the virus - that were well known from international research in April. SA did not close schools at all. NSW traced every contact from school closures in March and found 2 transmissions in 812 contacts. Note, also, that a transmission is not a sickness. Every one of those initial cases had few symptoms and made a full recovery.

My wife and I have both suffered panic attacks as we have struggled with family breakdowns related to the draconian nature of the lockdown - and we have been extremely distressed by the government's wilful erosion of basic freedoms (many of them arbitrary). The virus does not harm our mental health, but this government does. Mandatory masks outdoors has great social cost, causes conflicts between strangers and forced children to never see the face of an adult besides their parents. The government has not produced any evidence that there is a commensurate benefit - or actually any benefit at all.

Having chosen against lockdowns, Sweden has recorded fewer than 6000 COVID deaths as I write. That is just over 3, per capita, for each one in Victoria to date. Add to this all the preventable deaths we will see in Victoria as a result of missed heart and cancer scans for early detection, mental health harms and lives ruined from business and job losses, and it is clear which approach has better health outcomes. Furthermore, Sweden is approaching herd immunity, while Victoria is one more stuff up away from going through it all again.

What's unforgivable is they haven't even done a cost benefit analysis that looks at all the harms of lockdown.

Less than 700 of those deaths in Sweden have been people under 70 (1.5 per million population). Victoria's response has been based on modelling that completely ignores this real life data.

It is always sad when old people die. But it is tragic that people young and old are being forced not to live, so that one demographic lives just a little bit longer - a matter of weeks or months - than they would otherwise have (in many cases, lonely and isolated themselves).

Do you have any additional comments or suggestions?:

I heard about this inquiry from a Liberal MLC - there could be more media advising the public of the opportunity to make submissions.

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Signature:

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