

25 September 2015

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee
Parliament House, Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

To The SARC Committee,

I am writing this submission to object to the proposed Public Health and Wellbeing (No Jab No Play) Bill 2015. As a parent of 3 young girls and a practicing health professional I have some concerns around the proposed new Victorian Legislation which potentially prevents children from being enrolled in 4 year old kindergarten programs and childcare programs across the state.

I am concerned about the number of vaccines required to be "fully" up to date. Further, it is my understanding that if this policy goes through any number of vaccines can be added to the schedule at any time. Currently the schedule recommends 41 vaccines given in 15 doses up to the age of 4. This is a significant increase to the recommended 16 vaccines given in 8 doses as at 1982.

As parents it is our instinct, responsibility and right to raise our children how we see fit, and of course with their best interests in mind. To have these fundamental rights taken away from us seems extremely unethical. If there is a risk (and there is - read the vaccine inserts) there must be a choice, all parents have the right and the duty to decide which risk is acceptable to their own families without coercion.

My intention is not to justify my opinions or bombard you with the endless amounts of research - my intention is simply to focus your attention on the complex issues surrounding the proposed legislation and request that you ask some important questions on behalf of myself and many other concerned families and individuals.

The government may maintain that no one is "forcing" anyone to do anything, yet access to early childhood education will only be provided if you are fully vaccinated - that is a significant incentive and places a lot of pressure on parents to comply. Who will be taking responsibility for any adverse health outcomes that may occur?

If the vaccines are so safe and effective why would the government have to implement this forceful plan, wouldn't we all be jumping at the chance to have it done? When we already have 90-95% of children following the current schedule, why such a push all of a sudden?

At present most parents, grandparents and children are receiving the pertussis vaccine, compliance rates are at an all time high - how can you justify that the vaccination is working when whooping cough cases are equally at an all time high?

As a health professional I also find it difficult to believe what I read in the media and first hand know the pressure we are under to NOT voice our concerns and opinions. Another major point that I hope the committee will consider is that health professionals run the risk of being de-registered or brought under disciplinary action if we are found to be advocating withholding or delaying the current vaccines. Therefore no-one in the community with any credibility is allowed to provide a different point of view, provide differing evidence or even raise concerns around this issue.

In addition to the above I lodge this objection based on The Victorian Charter of Human Rights & Responsibility and believe the following sections have been or will be breached.

Section 8

The rights of parents to express a view based on research and scientific evidence contrary to that government advisors have promoted have been abrogated. They are not recognised or treated equally under the law.

Section 13

All immunisation records or lack there of will be public knowledge, teachers, enrolment officers etc will all have access to this information leading to possible discrimination.

Sections 14,15 & 16

The right of freedom to speech has already been breached as health professionals across all modalities are discriminated against. If they speak out with an alternate view, with alternate evidence and in any way are seen to support objections to this proposed law, they face deregistration from their respective Registration Boards.

As a result, counter arguments and balanced debate has not occurred from those qualified with medical and scientific training - they have been unfairly and unjustly silenced which cuts across all three rights as noted above - the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief (s14), the right to freedom of expression (s 15), the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of association (section 16)

Section 17

Under the proposal, the ONLY accepted reason for exclusion is if children have ALREADY had an adverse reaction to immunisation. Parents who do not wish to take this risk clearly have lost their right to protect their children in the way they believe to be in their best interests. In addition, if there IS an adverse reaction, there is no protection as the risks of such reactions are spelt out in the fine print of the medication packaging.

I fear that there are a lot of large stakeholders invested in this issue, and I consider it important that the committee gives serious thought to what comes next if we go down this path.

I know I'm not the only one with these concerns.

Regards,

Anonymous

(registered health practitioner with AHPRA unable to speak out about this)