

Submission: Covid-19 Response Inquiry

Need for suitable isolation/quarantine accommodation:

Clearly, there were issues regarding the provision of suitable quarantine/isolation facilities. Satisfactory ventilation was an issue, resulting in people being cross-infected whilst in makeshift accommodation in hotels, etc. We need some purpose designed and built facilities situated near – but not in - major population centres.

Quicker response from Federal Government:

At one stage then PM Morrison announced there was not a problem, he'd be off to the footy at the weekend! It was pressure from the premiers and first ministers that forced Morrison to be responsive (and responsible). There needs to be a clear system in place for speedy assessment of emerging risks and appropriate responses.

Mask mandating:

In situations where masks are an appropriate response, property owners/managers must be empowered to refuse entry to people who are not wearing masks. There were several cases where I entered supermarkets and other stores where people were not wearing masks, but store managers were powerless to enforce this requirement.

Access to green spaces:

In Tasmania, there was a lack of consistency between local government areas regarding access to parks and reserves. Hobart and several other councils permitted people to access reserves, whilst partitioning off BBQs, etc. to prevent groups from forming. However, in my area, Glenorchy Council barred all access to parks and reserves. This meant that, in order to obtain satisfactory exercise, I was forced to use footpaths to reach suitable locations. This meant that people were forced to use limited spaces, resulting in having to be close to other people. In my case, I was walking up hill on a footpath on the way home when a cyclist came up behind me huffing and puffing. On another occasion an individual crossed the road onto the footpath I was using a few metres in front of me. There was no need for him to cross the road at this point, as he continued on past me for several minutes.

In this case, I suggest that state governments develop policies regarding access to green spaces to permit public access for individuals and family groups, consistent with social distancing recommendations. Clearly the risk of transmission is going to be much less in ventilated outdoor areas than in enclosed spaces, such as supermarkets.