

Dear Covid 19 Response Enquiry,

The following submission is in regard to the consequences and effects the Australian Federal and State Governments covid 19 response decisions had, and continue to have, on myself and my wife.

At the beginning of [REDACTED] My wife and I had commenced a years sabbatical during which we were travelling via [REDACTED] with a return date planned for [REDACTED]

The Australian Governments advice against travel was issued after our departure.

In [REDACTED] and located in [REDACTED] we were plunged into lockdown.

At the start of [REDACTED] the [REDACTED] government lifted some of its travel bans and we were free to travel in [REDACTED] which we undertook.

In [REDACTED] it became apparent to us that the Australian government's decision, of indeterminate length, to drastically limit flights into the country, along with its uncompromising hotel quarantine policy, was severely restricting travel and effectively acting as a financial border closure to those Australians overseas getting home. It was at this point in late [REDACTED] that we began to attempt to book a flight home to Australia. After many attempts, with many flight changes and with increased costs, including the change of our destination from our home airport of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] we successfully returned to Australia in [REDACTED]

Like tens of thousands of others, we experienced the horror of hotel quarantine. The forced denial of our basic human rights, our liberty and freedom, even access to fresh air was what we were greeted with on our home soil. We had no choice but to comply and were effectively coerced under the watchful eyes of members of the [REDACTED] police, government officials and armed forces into a transaction (Quarantine fees, provision of care -biopsychosocial medical, food, drink, fresh air, warmth and shelter, with a nebulous body (State government health department or hotel or federal government – the legal framework remains entirely dubious as to who holds the ownership of cost and responsibility and has not been tested in court to my knowledge)).

During the quarantine period we received brief, poorly delivered and inconsistent check in phone calls (Not every day) to the hotel room. We did not leave the room for 14 days and during this period did not have access to fresh air (the windows did not open). [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] however the experience and subsequent ill qualified support from the 'nurse' on the phone illustrated too me that no one was immune to the mental health impact of having ones basic human rights removed in such a manner, and that there would be many who were experiencing this at a much higher level of acuteness causing a genuine risk to life.

To add insult to injury, I was charged \$1000 and my wife \$3000 for the privilege of this incarceration, the unethical and immoral nature of a cost as well as the disparity in costs escapes my reasoning.

Subsequent to this experience in [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] My wife was again coerced into signing a document stating that she would be prepared to pay for hotel quarantine in her future return to Australia, that she would not return within three months, and that without this signed acknowledgement, a permission to fly would not be granted.

My wife arrived [REDACTED]

When my wife did return to [REDACTED] Australia in [REDACTED] she was again incarcerated in hotel quarantine, but this time with the additional trauma of [REDACTED] alone in isolation.

Despite requests to quarantine at home, [REDACTED] her request was denied.

The argument must be made that; there is no reasonable moral justification for a state or government to implement and charge a member of the public a cost for a measure the government has imposed in this regard, and which denies basic human rights, to purportedly be the best and only measure available to protect the population at large from harm, and that results in a detrimental physical and / or mental impact on the individual.

We (My wife and I) continue to be harassed and pursued for payment by the authorities of [REDACTED] though not currently (at the time of writing) by [REDACTED] for payment of the hotel quarantine, to which we did not willingly and freely accept.