

## **My Experience During Covid**

I am a [REDACTED] with the time to keep up to date on Covid matters. I am probably best informed about what is working and what is not working for the older Australians but because I have the ability and means to avoid Covid for the most part, I am much more concerned for my family and in fact for the whole of the younger generations.

I find it excruciating watching while misinformed politicians/medicos act in a way that puts the whole population at risk, while they could, with very little effort, make such a difference to people's health by taking a different approach.

I watch as people lose trust in Government Ministers and officials who think concealing data and pretending the disease has disappeared will placate the population, a tactic that may help people forget the disease for some time but which is ultimately counterproductive. If we pretended people didn't die on the roads that wouldn't help reduce road deaths and a virus you can track and follow is much less potent than one you are pretending is not there.

While data was available I have been able to avoid a Covid infection by scheduling [REDACTED] appointments [REDACTED] and other unavoidable meetings when data showed the virus was low but completely isolating when the virus was prevalent. I am one of the lucky ones who had the ability to do that but nowadays with data being unavailable it is much more difficult to avoid the disease without continual isolation.

## **My suggestions:**

Make the date about the prevalence of Covid publically available, maybe in a weekly basis if daily is too onerous. Biweekly is too infrequent. It doesn't have to be in the daily news, but it should be accessible to the public so they can make informed decisions. Hiding data infantilises the public and makes public officials look deceitful. You can't ask people to take individual responsibility then withhold the data that enables them to do that.

Make as much data about vaccines available as possible. The government's effort was commendable at the beginning of the pandemic but it has slipped a bit in recent times. There was no information at all about when the new vaccines were coming until mid November. Don't be covered by anti vaxers. The majority of the population are not swayed by them and if you don't give them air they will lose traction.

Facilitate clean air in public buildings, in particular schools and health care settings. We know by now that this is an airborne disease but you wouldn't know if by looking at the advice many health departments are giving the public. Businesses should be helped to take action to make the air in their premises clean.

Give better informed advice. I got a [REDACTED] Government [REDACTED] Newsletter today with a letter by the minister responsible [REDACTED] telling people to wash their hands. It is inexcusable to tell [REDACTED] that this will protect them. The minister might not be a scientist but she should certainly be better informed than she appears to be. I have the impression that many officials think that only the [REDACTED] vulnerable are at risk when in reality everyone is one infection away from long Covid and of increased risk of the many illnesses that are Covid linked. At this point in the cycle the public should be being advised to mask in public places including mandatory masking in public transport. Someone needs to examine the reluctance of officials to properly inform people and clear away impediments.

Make it easier for the [REDACTED] to get antivirals. My personal doctor is a one-man practice without the means to do PCR tests and without enough information to know what I should do if I need them. There should be much better information about how to access antivirals in this situation. Telehealth may do this but I seldom see information about it. The minister [REDACTED] could do so much that would be really useful in this regard.

Give the public better advice. I have family members who have not been vaccinated this year and don't realise they should be. Younger ones are reluctant to continuing to vaccinate, not realising the risks with constantly changing viral strains. The government should persist with ads through tic tok etc to counteract the misinformation being put out by the antivaxers.

I am not sure who is responsible for the delay in updated vaccines this year but it will result in more sickness and death than needed to be. The process of vaccine purchase needs review.

The advisors I have found most informed and helpful include Dr. Raina Macintyre, Professor Brendan Crabb and the John Snow Project. Their advice should be used to better inform our officials.