



PREMIER OF TASMANIA

21 December 2023

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee's inquiry into the appropriate terms of reference for a COVID-19 Royal Commission.

The Tasmanian Government does not believe that there is a need for a COVID-19 Royal Commission as each state and territory has already undertaken numerous reviews or inquiries into their response to the pandemic. In Tasmania, this includes the following inquiries:

- Independent Review of the Response to the North-West Tasmania COVID-19 Outbreak
- Tasmanian Government submission:
https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/independent_review_of_the_response_to_the_north-west_tasmania_covid-19_outbreak/submissions/tasmanian_government_response
- Final report: https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0026/127259/North-West_Outbreak_Report_Final_10_May_2021.pdf
- Tasmanian Government response:
https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/independent_review_of_the_response_to_the_north-west_tasmania_covid-19_outbreak/tasmanian_government_response_to_the_final_report_of_the_independent_review
- Public Accounts Committee inquiry into the Government's economic and health expenditure response to the COVID-19 pandemic (2020)
 - Tasmanian Government submission:
https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/57244/420tasmanian20government.pdf
 - Final report: https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0027/58356/covid-1920inquiry20final20report20full20signed.pdf

- Public Accounts Committee ongoing inquiry into the Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic (2022-23)
 - Tasmanian Government submission:
https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0027/59157/2022042120tasmanian20government20submission20to20covid-1920follow-up20inquiry.pdf.
 - Report 1 - Preparation for the Return to School in February 2022:
https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0034/73879/FINAL-PAC-Report-8-September-2023-Inquiry-into-the-Tasmanian-Governments-Continuing-Response-to-the-COVID-19-Pandemic-Preparation-for-the-Return-to-School-in-February-2022.pdf
 - Report 2 - Preparation for the State Border Re-Opening:
[https://media.parliament.tas.gov.au/legco/pdf/FINAL%20PAC%20Report%20\(10%20October%202023\)%20-%20COVID-19%20pandemic%20-%20Preparation%20for%20the%20State%20border%20reopening.pdf](https://media.parliament.tas.gov.au/legco/pdf/FINAL%20PAC%20Report%20(10%20October%202023)%20-%20COVID-19%20pandemic%20-%20Preparation%20for%20the%20State%20border%20reopening.pdf)
 - Report 3 - Business Support and COVID-19 App:
https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0027/75384/FINAL-PAC-Report-18-October-2023-Inquiry-into-the-Tasmanian-Governments-Continuing-Response-to-the-COVID-19-Pandemic-Business-Support-and-COVID-19-App.pdf

The Tasmanian Government also provided submissions to a range of COVID-19 response related Tasmanian Audit Office inquiries. Further information on these inquiries, including the final reports for each, can be found on the Tasmanian Audit Office website: <https://www.audit.tas.gov.au/>.

The Tasmanian Government recognises the value in identifying lessons learned from the COVID-19 response to improve Australia's preparedness for future pandemics. We are currently engaging with the Commonwealth Government's COVID-19 Response Inquiry and will provide a submission to that Inquiry.

If there is to be a COVID-19 Royal Commission, the Tasmanian Government recommends the terms of reference focus on making recommendations to improve Australia's response in the event of future pandemics, similar to the terms of reference for the current COVID-19 Response Inquiry. They should stipulate that the findings of previous inquiries and reviews undertaken both at a federal level and by individual states and territories be considered to avoid duplicating work. Our Government does not believe it would be appropriate for actions taken by individual states and territories to be within the scope of a COVID-19 Royal Commission.

Thank you again for providing the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Rockliff MP
Premier