

From: s22
To: s22 [MARTIN, Nick](#)
Subject: TPs for Mark here [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Tuesday, 29 October 2024 10:32:17 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

 [241029 TPs.docx](#)

Happy for edits/thoughts/come to chat through

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982 (CTH)
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE

COVID INQUIRY PRESS CONFERENCE

29/10/14

On the outset can I thanks Robyn Kruk, Catherine Bennett and Angela Jackson for their work on this really important contribution to the story of COVID in Australia.

This Inquiry spoke to all state and territory leaders, it spoke to agencies, it spoke to industry and most importantly it spoke to Australians about their COVID experience.

This Inquiry will be the blueprint to ensure Australia is better prepared for the next pandemic – and there will be another pandemic.

The next pandemic will not be unprecedented, and we do the public a disservice if we disregard the lessons of the last one.

COVID was a period of immense uncertainty for all Australians.

As the Inquiry makes clear, Australia lacked sufficient planning and preparation for a pandemic.

Governments were "building the plane while flying it".

In the face of that uncertainty, the public gave over extraordinary amounts of trust and made huge sacrifices, particularly in the first phase of the pandemic.

Thousands of Australians lost their lives, people stayed at home, borders were closed.

While the pandemic impacted all Australians, it did not impact all Australians equally. All governments need to do better.

We cannot afford to make the same mistakes again.

The economic, social and human costs have been high. We will be living with the impacts for many years.

Those impacts linger on in the education of our children, the mental health of our young people, and the health of every Australian that missed a cancer screening or a health check.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Australians for their trust in the Government decisions that were made at the time.

The Inquiry is a reminder of the incredible service and sacrifice of so many people, not just frontline workers, but every single person in Australia.

There are a lot of lessons.

This Inquiry lays bare what we must do to make sure Australia is prepared for the next pandemic.

We have to rebuild trust with Australians.

And that starts with being more transparent than – something the Inquiry calls for.

Which is why we are releasing the Inquiry just days after it was delivered to government, to start from a place of transparency.

We have to be honest with people about how and why decisions are being made.

We have to be better prepared.

That is why today with the release of this inquiry we are delivering on our commitment to establish an Australian Centre for Disease Control.

This is a key recommendation from the inquiry.

As the Inquiry highlights, Australia went into the COVID pandemic with no playbook for the pandemic, limited readiness of the National Medical Stockpile, and badly stretched aged and health care systems.

Because of the lack of planning Australia's pandemic response to COVID was slow, confused and lacked authority.

The establishment of the Australian CDC will help ensure we are prepared next time.

Within the next 24 hours, I'll be discussing the Inquiry with my health minister colleagues. Those discussions will continue over coming months.

Given the Inquiry touches every portfolio and our relationship with states and territories, we have asked PM&C will establish a Cross Agency Taskforce to provide advice to Cabinet.

From: MARTIN, Nick
To: s22 [REDACTED]@minstaff.vic.gov.au"; s22 [REDACTED] (Health);
 s22 [REDACTED]@nt.gov.au; s22 [REDACTED]
Cc: s22 [REDACTED]
Subject: EMBARGOED: Strictly Confidential [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive, ACCESS=Legal-Privilege]
Date: Tuesday, 29 October 2024 1:12:14 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[COVID-19 Response Inquiry Report.pdf](#)
[COVID 19 Response Inquiry Summary Final.pdf](#)
Importance: High

Embargoed and Strictly Confidential Until Public Release

Dear Chiefs of Staff,

Attached are two documents prepared by the COVID 19 Response Inquiry.

- COVID 19 Response Inquiry Summary Report
- COVID 19 Response Inquiry Full Report

The summary response is drafted specifically to provide clear lessons for future pandemic preparedness.

The Inquiry Panel has examined what worked well, the longer-term repercussions of some of the policies enacted, and, most importantly, where Australia can make improvements to prepare and protect our country for future infectious disease crises.

The report includes 9 guiding recommendations and 26 actions for change to improve Australia's preparedness and response systems to manage public health emergencies. 19 of these are immediate actions for implementation (in the next 12 to 18 months), and 18 actions directly impact the Commonwealth Health and Aged Care portfolio.

- The nine recommendations highlight what the Panel considered are the nine pillars of a successful pandemic response: minimising harm, planning and preparedness, leadership, evidence and evaluation, agility, relationships, trust, equity, and communications.

The report's recommendations are for the Commonwealth to implement or lead, but there are a number that will require consultation and agreement from states and territories. This recognises the important role states and territories play in the health response but also the contentious areas where responsibilities were unclear or overlapped. Key actions relate to:

- updating health emergency planning and response arrangements, including escalation and de-escalation points and options for real-time review
- national governance including providing additional expertise to National Cabinet
- the need to agree and document responsibilities of all key parties in a national health emergency including escalation triggers
- a national strategy for trust in vaccines and improving vaccination rates
- clarity in communications during national health emergencies.

In releasing the report today, the Commonwealth Government will indicate the findings will require careful consideration and consultation across the Commonwealth and with states and territories over the coming months.

The Commonwealth Government will also announce its plans for an Australian CDC today.

Regards

Nick Martin

Chief of Staff

Office of the Minister for Health and Aged Care

M: ^{s47F} | E: ^{s47F} [@health.gov.au](mailto:health.gov.au)

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From: s22
To: [Terry Slevin](#)
Subject: RE: Inquiry report [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Tuesday, 29 October 2024 11:34:00 AM

Hi Terry

I'll give you a call around 1pm to discuss.

Cheers

s22

From: Terry Slevin [s47F](#) @phaa.net.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 29 October 2024 11:31 AM
To: s22 @Health.gov.au>
Subject: Inquiry report

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Hi s22

I've had a call from a Journo from the Oz who is in the Covid Response Inquiry lock up. I understand that ends at 2pm.

I am presuming the report will be in the public domain at some time after that.

Any tips or observations your end that might be of interest or use ?

Cheers

Terry

Adjunct Professor Terry Slevin

Chief Executive Officer

Honorary Professor, College of Health and Medicine, Australian National University

Adjunct Professor, National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University

Ph Switch 02 6285 2373 Direct s47F **M.** s47F
 Public Health Association of Australia PO Box 319, Curtin ACT 2605 | Ph: s47F | www.phaa.net.au

I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which I live and work and pay my respects to their elders past and present.



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From: [Minister Butler Media](#)
To: s47F @csiro.au
Subject: RE: Cosmos query - CDC extension [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Wednesday, 23 October 2024 4:43:11 PM

Hi s47F

The Department passed on your enquiry. Please see a response below.

Quotes attributable to a spokesperson for Minister Butler:

Before we came into Government Australia was the only OECD country without a CDC equivalent and the former Government had not led a national pandemic drill for 12 years.

We have established the interim Australian Centre for Disease Control, which is already significantly strengthening Australia's preparedness for future pandemics.

The interim Australian CDC has already built-up Australia's surveillance capabilities, improved Australia's use of data, and has taken a One Health and "all hazards" approach –putting our country on a much stronger footing to respond to future public health threats such as pandemics. Work is underway to establish the stand-alone Australian CDC.

Background

- There is substantial work underway through the interim CDC to enhance Australia's national health emergency planning, preparedness and response capability, strengthen partnerships with stakeholders and improve the delivery of national public health advice. The work of the interim CDC will form the foundations for the future Australian CDC.
- The interim Australian CDC is focused on improving Australia's pandemic preparedness, response to emerging health risks and health emergencies and response to communicable disease. This has included the establishment of a [One Health Unit](#) and [Health Security Unit](#), launch of the inaugural [Australian Respiratory Surveillance Report](#), creation and launch of the [National Occupational Respiratory Disease Registry](#), launch of the successful [Beforeplay STI campaign](#) and new communications activities to increase transparency and stakeholder engagement with the interim Australian CDC, including a recent [Avian Influenza Fact Sheet](#).
- In addition, the Australian Government recently convened a major national exercise as it continues to strengthen its biosecurity measures against a strain of avian influenza with significant risks to Australia, including our unique wildlife and poultry. The interim Australian CDC has been involved throughout this exercise, alongside representatives from all levels of government across agriculture, environment, health and emergency management joined with Animal Health Australia, Wildlife Health Australia, environment groups, poultry producers and other stakeholders to test Australia's response to this highly virulent strain should it arrive on our shores.
- Further information on the work of the interim Australian CDC can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov.au/news>

Thanks,

Minister Butler Media Team

From: s47F (Science Connect, Adelaide K. Ave) s47F @csiro.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 23 October 2024 1:52 PM
To: News <news@health.gov.au>; CDC Enquiries <cdc.enquiries@cdc.gov.au>
Subject: Cosmos query - CDC extension

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Good afternoon,

s47F from Cosmos here - I called a few minutes ago. I'm covering the Australian CDC for our website, ahead of the release of the COVID-19 Inquiry Response Report this Friday.

I've got a couple of questions - would anyone at the Department be available for a short interview, or respond over email? Ideally it would be great to have a response by 5pm AEDT today, but 1pm tomorrow would also be fine if necessary.

- Following the delivery of the COVID-19 Response Report, when do you expect to make a decision about the shape and nature of the permanent CDC?

- The PHAA and other health bodies are calling for a substantial financial commitment to the CDC before the next election. Do you expect this to happen?

Thank you, and kind regards,

Ellen

s47F (she/her)

Science Journalist

Cosmos | CSIRO Publishing | CSIRO

s47F @csiro.au s47F

Kaurna Land

13 Kintore Avenue, Adelaide SA 5000

CSIRO acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land, sea and waters, of the area that we live and work on across Australia. We acknowledge their continuing connection to their culture and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

CSIRO Australia's National Science Agency | [csiro.au](https://www.csiro.au)

From: [Minister Butler Media](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: Media request - Covid inquiry lock-up
Date: Tuesday, 29 October 2024 8:20:56 AM

FYI

Sent from [Workspace ONE Boxer](#)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED] / NEWSROOM/
[REDACTED]@bloomberg.net>
Date: 29 October 2024 at 7:50:31 AM ACDT
Subject: Media request - Covid inquiry lock-up
To: Minister Butler Media <Minister.Butler.Media@Health.gov.au>

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Good morning Team Butler,

Could you please include me in any lock-up ahead of the release of the Covid-19 report?

Thanks very much,

[REDACTED]

Australia Government Reporter - Canberra

[REDACTED]

From: s22
To: s22; [MARTIN, Nick](#)
Subject: COVID-19 Response Inquiry - Report and Summary [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]
Date: Tuesday, 29 October 2024 10:51:08 AM
Attachments: [COVID-19 Response Inquiry Report.pdf](#)
[COVID 19 Response Inquiry Summary Final.pdf](#)

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OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Both summary and final report attached.

s22 | **Press Secretary**
 Office of the Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese MP
 Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600
 M ^{547F} s22 | E ⁵²² [@pm.gov.au](mailto:s22@pm.gov.au)

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From: s22
To: s22
Subject: FW: Draft media release - COVID-19 inquiry report [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Tuesday, 29 October 2024 11:20:45 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[DRAFT MEDIA QA - COVID-19 Inquiry report - 29 October.docx](#)

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From: PMC Media <Media@pmc.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 29 October 2024 10:18 AM
To: s22 @pm.gov.au>
Cc: PMC Media <Media@pmc.gov.au>; s22 @pmc.gov.au>;
s22 @pmc.gov.au>; s22 @pmc.gov.au>;
s22 @pmc.gov.au>; s22 @pm.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Draft media release - COVID-19 inquiry report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s22

Please see attached Q&A to support as well.

Cheers

s22

PM&C Media

Communications Branch
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
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e. media@pmc.gov.au | w. pmc.gov.au

***Note to media:** Unless otherwise agreed, the information contained in this email is for background only and not for attribution.*

From: s22 @pm.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 29 October 2024 9:37 AM
To: s22 @pmc.gov.au>; s22 @pm.gov.au>
Cc: PMC Media <Media@pmc.gov.au>; s22 @pmc.gov.au>;
s22 @pmc.gov.au>; s22 @pmc.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Draft media release - COVID-19 inquiry report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Thanks very much s22

Cheers

s22

From: s22 <[REDACTED]@pmc.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 29 October 2024 9:26 AM
To: s22 <[REDACTED]@pmc.gov.au>; s22 <[REDACTED]@pmc.gov.au>
Cc: PMC Media <Media@pmc.gov.au>; s22 <[REDACTED]@pmc.gov.au>; s22 <[REDACTED]@pmc.gov.au>; s22 <[REDACTED]@pmc.gov.au>
Subject: Draft media release - COVID-19 inquiry report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Good morning

Please see attached a draft media release – Q&A to follow shortly.

Let us know if you have any questions.

Thanks

s22

Director, Public Affairs and Media
 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
 Phone: s47E(d) [REDACTED]
 Mobile: s47E(d) [REDACTED]



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MEDIA Q&A - COVID-19 Response Inquiry

Does the Government accept the inquiry's recommendations?

- The panel only handed to the Prime Minister last Friday and it is a substantial report.
- The government will release a response after carefully considering the panel's recommendations.

Did former Prime Minister Morrison and Health Minister Greg Hunt participate?

- Yes, former Prime Minister Scott Morrison and former Health Minister Greg Hunt met with the independent panel to contribute to the Inquiry.
- A number of other former Ministers also contributed to the Inquiry and agreed to have their names published – the former Treasurer the Hon Josh Frydenberg, the former Minister for Indigenous Australians the Hon Key Wyatt AM, and the former Minister for Aged Care, Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck.

Did all (then) Premiers and Chief Ministers participate?

- The Inquiry actively engaged with state, territory and local governments.
- The Inquiry engaged with some Premiers and Chief Ministers, however, participants were not required to disclose their participation.
- The Hon Dominic Perrottet, the Hon Annastacia Palaszczuk and the Hon Mark McGowan AO have agreed to have their names published in the report.

Should this Inquiry have had investigative powers to compel all former Ministers to fully participate?

- There was wide engagement from all levels of government, including former Ministers.
- The nature of the Inquiry encouraged open and honest input from Ministers and all stakeholders. This may not have been possible if investigative powers were used.

Melbourne had the longest lockdown in the world, yet this report contains no substantive mention of then Premier Daniel Andrews and his role. Was its scope too narrow?

- This inquiry focused on the Commonwealth's response to the pandemic. This included a broad range of actions that were taken – from border closures to vaccine supply.
- We know the pandemic was extremely difficult for many Australians.
- The review acknowledges the need for federal, state and territory governments to work together and consider all potential impacts of government action during a crisis – social, human rights, economic and mental health.

The inquiry is critical of the delay in securing and rolling out vaccines in Australia. Have lessons been learned?

- Work is already well underway to establish an mRNA vaccine manufacturing facility in Melbourne.
 - The Australian Government is working in partnership with the Victorian Government and Moderna.
- Once operational the facility is expected to be able to produce 100 million vaccine doses every year.
- The Government will consider the recommendations of the Inquiry.

Why has the Australian Centre for Disease Control stalled – when will it be fully implemented and funded?

- The Australian Government agreed to fund establishment of the permanent Australian CDC as part of the most recent MYEFO.
- An interim CDC launched on 1 November. In the most recent budget, the government committed \$90 million to establish the CDC.

Who was consulted on the Inquiry's report? Could all Australians contribute?

- The Inquiry received 2,201 public submissions. It undertook more than 250 stakeholder interviews and hosted 27 roundtables.
- The Inquiry also commissioned lived experience focus groups and a community input survey to ensure a wide variety of stakeholder views were heard.
- The submissions process was open to all Australians.

Are you concerned by the lack of trust in government, following the pandemic?

- Public sentiment and trust have changed since the pandemic.
- Planning for a potential future pandemic will need to take this into account.
- Government will take into account lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic, and recommendations to improve levels of trust in our community.

What is the government doing to address widespread and growing vaccine hesitancy?

- Vaccines save lives. They help to protect everyone – and in particular our most vulnerable – babies, small children and elderly Australians.
- Government will carefully consider the Inquiry's recommendations to address vaccine hesitancy.

Do you agree that the economic stimulus was excessive and contributed to inflation?

- Australia's economy performed remarkably well during the pandemic.

- The purpose of this Inquiry was to identify what worked well and where we can improve to prepare for the next crisis.

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1:46

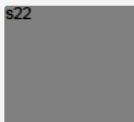
FOI 25-0084 LD - document 8



5G

81

s22



2 People >

iMessage

Tue, 29 Oct at 10:01 AM

s47F

Morning both, ^{s47F} from
Radio National Drive.

Hope you've got blue skies today

Would Minister Butler be available
for an interview with ^{s47F} at
either 4.06 or 5.06pm AEDT on the
COVID inquiry response?

Can pre-rec earlier if needed

Page 1 of 7

1:45

FOI 25-0084 LD - document 8



s22



Tue, 29 Oct at 8:20 AM

Hey what time is the Covid inquiry
lock up thing going to be?



Hey lockup likely 12.30 with 2pm
presser

Wed, 30 Oct at 12:00 PM



S47F



Tue, 29 Oct at 8:14 AM

Hey ^{S22} - is there a ballpark time for the Covid inquiry lockup? We're short on troops so trying to plan ahead

Likely 12.30

Cool thanks

With a presser afterwards?

Yeah 2pm presser

Delivered

Great ta

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iMessage



1:46

FOI 25-0084 LD - document 8



647F



Tue, 29 Oct at 8:14 AM

Hello, do you have a rough time for the covid inquiry lock up? And how long lock up will go for?

Likely 12.30



New Contact Name

Update



Tue, 29 Oct at 8:27 AM

Hey ^{s22} what time do you think Covid inquiry embargo will lift?



Hey lockup likely 12.30 with 2pm presser

Read 29/10/2024

Thanks



iMessage



Q W E R T Y U I O P

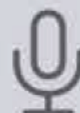
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123

space

return





S47F



Thursday, 24 Oct • 1:04 pm

Hey

S22



Is the COVID report likely to be public tomorrow when provided to govt ?



s47F

s22

Fri, 25 Oct at 9:10 AM

Hi

s22

Happy Friday !

If you are able to advise, is the
covid inquiry report being
published today?

s47F

Hello.

s22

s47F

It's being handed to govt today.
Won't be published today

Fri, 25 Oct at 10:12 AM

Thanks! Is there a general timeline
for publication?

s22



iMessage

