



Hon Yvette D'Ath MP
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Mr Neil Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliament
George Street
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14 APR 2022

Dear Mr Laurie

I write in response to your letter regarding petition number 3695-22, tabled in Parliament on 16 March 2022, in relation to the impact of COVID-19 in the community and the petitioners' request for access to detailed reports of COVID-19 impacts on the Queensland Health website.

It is important that a relevant and appropriate level of data is publicly available to Queenslanders to ensure the community has access to reliable, up to date information about the COVID-19 pandemic and our health service response. The information provided on the Queensland COVID-19 statistics website is updated daily and every effort is made to ensure this data is accurate at time of publication, noting point-in-time data is reported.

To address the petitioners' first request, in Queensland's reporting, the term "Unvaccinated" is only used when the person has not received any dose of COVID-19 vaccine or if their vaccination status was unknown. It does not include those who have received one dose of vaccine.

In relation to the second and third requests regarding the medical history, demographic and vaccine status of people who test positive, who are hospitalised with or who die from COVID-19, I can advise the following.

All COVID-19 data reported must be respectful of each patient's right to privacy and confidentiality and be protected and promoted in accordance with the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld) and other relevant laws.

With respect to the reporting of deaths, the number reported in Queensland is the total number of people who have tested positive for COVID-19 around the time of their death. As it can be difficult to attribute a death to a single cause, particularly for people who have multiple medical conditions, deaths reported include anyone who dies with COVID-19, except where COVID-19 can be easily excluded as a factor in the death (for example, a vehicle accident). The presence of underlying health issues and pre-existing conditions for those who are in ICU or who die are not reported on the Queensland COVID-19 statistics website.

Publishing the presence of underlying health issues and pre-existing conditions in this context has limited relevance. It is well established that the impacts of COVID-19 are more severe among those with comorbidities and with older age. It is also well established that vaccination protects against moderate to severe outcomes and death from COVID-19. Notwithstanding these facts, every death is a tragedy, regardless of the health of the person prior to contracting COVID-19.

It is worth considering that categorising COVID-19 deaths according to a person's pre-existing medical history or health status risks diminishing the life of the person who has died, and indeed could even be perceived as conveying some form of responsibility on the person with the disability or comorbidity for their death.

Queensland Health's [published information](#) about COVID-19 statistics is updated daily. It includes data on new and total cases, hospitalisations including ICU, testing and vaccination coverage. This information is provided by Hospital and Health Service and Local Government Area, as well as by the age group and gender of cases.

The Queensland Government's [Open Data Portal](#) also includes a line list of Queensland's COVID-19 cases by the date of the individual's notification, the location of their usual residence and the source of their infection.

In addition, a range of information is published at the national level, including epidemiology reports that are issued by the Australian Government Department of Health. These reports cover trends including source of acquisition; demographics of cases; and illness severity. The Australian Bureau of Statistics also publishes a range of data relating to COVID-19, including COVID-19 deaths.

Finally, in regard to the reporting of adverse reactions, all adverse reactions from COVID-19 vaccines are reported to the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA). The TGA receives adverse event reports associated with medicines and medical devices. These reports come from a wide range of sources, including members of the public, general practitioners, nurses, other health professionals and the therapeutic goods industry.

The Database of Adverse Event Notifications (DAEN) - medicines contains information from reports of adverse events that the TGA has received in relation to medicines, including vaccines, used in Australia. As it is the TGA's role to closely monitor reports of suspected side effects (also known as adverse events) to the COVID-19 vaccines, they are best placed to report on the safety of the four COVID-19 vaccines currently in use in Australia. The TGA publishes a weekly COVID-19 safety report that can be accessed at <https://www.tga.gov.au/periodic/covid-19-vaccine-weekly-safety-report-17-03-2022>.

Information on Queensland COVID-19 cases and vaccination levels is available on the Queensland COVID-19 statistics website at <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/statistics>.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely



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