

**From:** s 22(1)(a)  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Cc:** [DLQ: Dobbie, Kim](#); [Steel, Lee](#); s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** COVID-19 Inquiry Appointments Brief [SEC=PROTECTED, CAVEAT=SH:CABINET]  
**Date:** Tuesday, 19 September 2023 12:40:16 PM  
**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[MB23-000120 001 Independent Panel Appointments - Australian Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry.docx](#)  
[MB23-000120 002 Attachment A - Instruments of Appointment.docx](#)  
[MB23-000120 003 Attachment B - Draft letters to Independent Panel Chair and Members.docx](#)  
[MB23-000120 004 Attachment C - Kruk CofI PID and CV.pdf](#)  
[MB23-000120 005 Attachment D - Bennett CofI PID and CV.pdf](#)  
[MB23-000120 006 Attachment E - Jackson CofI PID and CV.pdf](#)  
[MB23-000120 007 Attachment F - Inquiry Terms of Reference.docx](#)

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~~PROTECTED//CABINET~~

Hi s 22(1)

Please see attached the COVID-19 Inquiry appointments brief. It is also in PDMS (MB23-000120).

The events brief for the announcement will follow later this afternoon.

Kind regards,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Senior Advisor  
Mental Health, Hospitals and First Nations Health | Health and Aged Care Branch  
Intergovernmental Relations and Reform Division | Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet  
One National Circuit, Barton ACT 2600 | PO Box 6500 CANBERRA ACT 2600  
p.s 22(1)(a)(ii) | e. s 22(1)(a)@pmc.gov.au | w. [www.pmc.gov.au](http://www.pmc.gov.au)



The Department acknowledges and pays respect to the past, present and emerging Elders and Traditional Custodians of Country, and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

**From:** [Dobbie, Kim](#)  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Cc:** [Steel, Lee](#) s 22(1)(a) [Deputy Secretary Social Policy Group](#); s 22(1)(a)  
**Subject:** \*FYI\* COVID Inquiry Taskforce - s 47C [SEC=PROTECTED]  
**Date:** Friday, 8 September 2023 2:24:05 PM  
**Attachments:** [image005.png](#)

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~~PROTECTED~~

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 47C



Please let me know if you would like any further information on any of the potential candidates listed below.

Thanks  
Kim

s 47C



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**From:** Dobbie, Kim <[Kim.Dobbie@pmc.gov.au](mailto:Kim.Dobbie@pmc.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Monday, 4 September 2023 3:14 PM  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Cc:** Steel, Lee <[Lee.Steel@pmc.gov.au](mailto:Lee.Steel@pmc.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** \*FYI\* COVID Inquiry Taskforce - appointments and ToR [SEC=PROTECTED]

~~PROTECTED~~

Hi s 22(1)

As promised in Friday's meeting, please see below summary of next steps to appoint the COVID-19 Inquiry panel members:

- PM&C will talk with proposed panel members to confirm their interest in participating in the Independent Panel.
  - The proposed panel members have requested clarification on the time requirement and milestones involved. PM&C is preparing a draft work program to provide this clarification.
- Subject to confirming interest, PM&C will send proposed panel members the mandatory appointment forms for completion (CV and Private Interests Declaration).
- s 47C
- PM&C will provide a PM brief to appoint the panel members. This will attach all necessary documentation and ask the PM to sign instruments of appointment and letters to the panel members who have been appointed.
- PM&C will organise Deeds of Engagement for each panel member and organise onboarding.

s 34(3)

• s 47C

• s 34(3)

Thanks

Kim

**Kim Dobbie** (she/her) | A/g Assistant Secretary

Health and Aged Care Branch | Intergovernmental Relations and Reform Division

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

p s 22(1)(a)(ii) | m. s 22(1)(a)(ii) | e. [kim.dobbie@pmc.gov.au](mailto:kim.dobbie@pmc.gov.au) | w. [pmc.gov.au](http://pmc.gov.au)

Ngunnawal Country, One National Circuit Barton ACT 2600 | PO Box 6500 CANBERRA ACT 2600

Executive Assistant: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

e. s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@pmc.gov.au](mailto:s 22(1)(a)(ii)@pmc.gov.au)



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Traditional Custodians of Country, and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

PM&C  
Secretary  
Ms Frame  
Ms Quilty  
Mr Neil  
Mr de Burgh  
Mr Pullen  
Ms Steele  
Ms Le Cerf  
Mr Reid  
Ms McKenzie  
Ms Lenthall  
Mr Rush  
Ms Field  
Mr Martin

To: Prime Minister

THROUGH: Cabinet Secretary

A NATIONAL INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

PMO  
CoS  
s 22(1)  
(a)(ii)

CABINET  
SECRETARY  
s 22(1)(a)  
(ii)

Recommendations - that you:

1. **Note** the Government has several options for setting up an inquiry into Australia's COVID-19 response. The most appropriate option for Government would be based on expectations around timing for establishing the inquiry, scope, desired powers, and cost.

Noted

s 47C

Agreed / Not Agreed

ANTHONY ALBANESE

Date:

Comments:

Key Points:

1. As Australia nears the three-year mark of responding to COVID-19, and has moved to non-emergency COVID-19 response settings, there is growing public and political interest for an examination of Australia's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government has committed to conducting a 'deep inquiry' into Australia's COVID-19 response.
  - a. To date, there have been several reviews focusing on Australia's pandemic performance, ranging from multi-year audits undertaken or planned by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), to the broader and more comprehensive independent reviews – as seen with *Fault Lines: An independent review into Australia's response to COVID-19* (the Shergold Review) released on 20 October 2022, and the Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 which tabled its final report in April 2022.
  - b. All states and territories, except the Northern Territory, have conducted – or are in the process of conducting – parliamentary inquiries into their COVID-19 responses.

s 47C

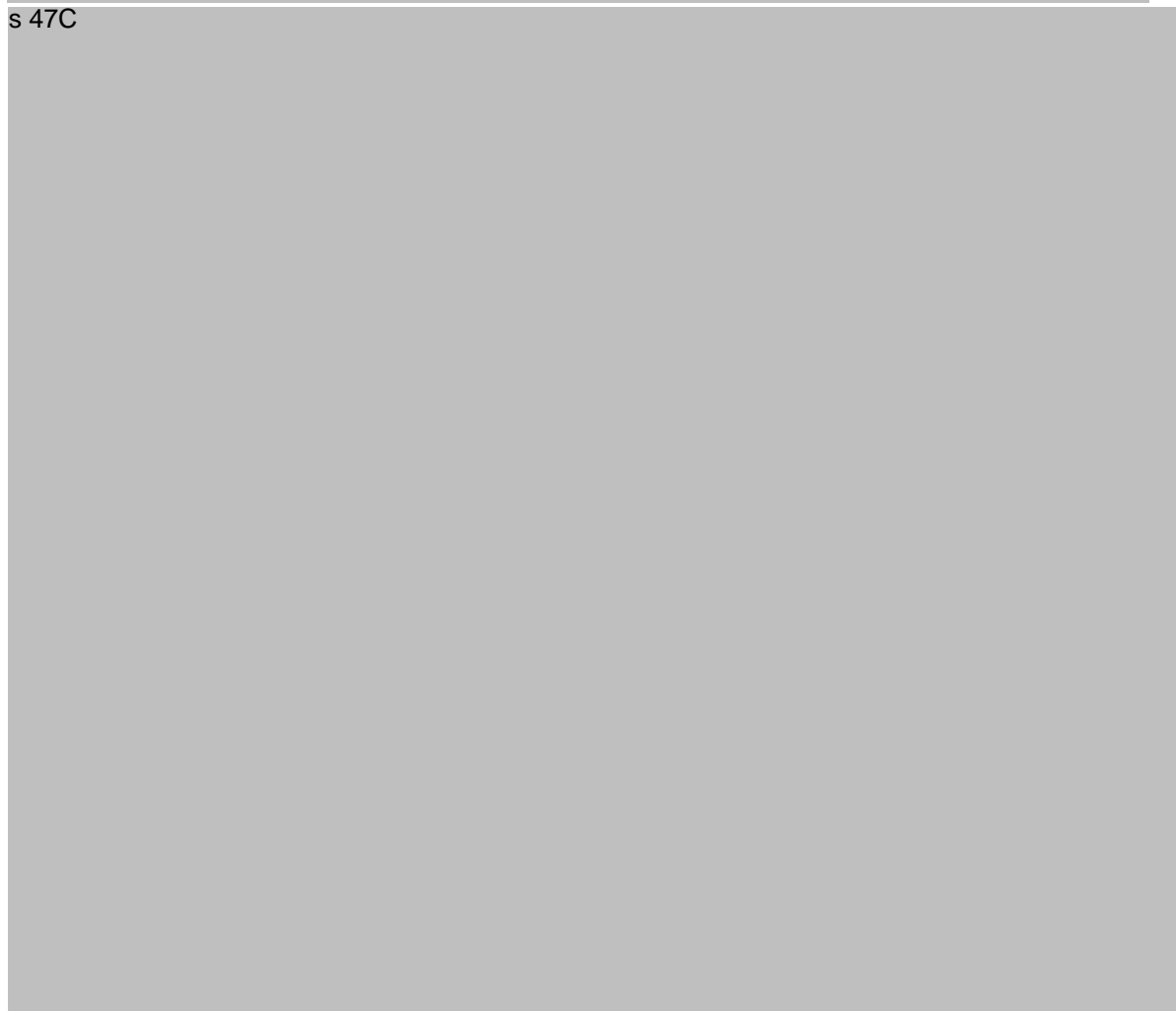


A National Inquiry into Australia's COVID-19 Response

4. The Government is currently progressing work to transition COVID-19 response measures to long term sustainable arrangements from January 2023. s 47C

s 47C



5. s 47C
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- 6.

**Sensitivities:**

11. s 47B(a)

12. s 47C

13.

14.

**Background:**

15. In response to calls for a Commonwealth review, you stated on 20 October 2022 that:

‘I have said clearly that my government will undertake, at some future time, a proper inquiry into the impact of the pandemic, the actions of governments. We need to learn the lessons from the pandemic. It is quite clear some of the lessons we have learnt and have indicated that we are responding to.’

16. The Governments of New Zealand, the United States, Canada, Singapore and France are in a similar stage as the Australian Government, having announced they will conduct respective inquiries into their COVID-19 responses ‘in due time’ or at the ‘appropriate time’.

**Consultation:**

Legal Policy, Government Division; Commonwealth-State Relations Branch; COVID-19 Transition Taskforce; and FOI, Cabinet Division.

Alison Frame  
Deputy Secretary  
Social Policy Group  
7 November 2022

Policy Officer: s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
s 22(1)(a)  
Phone no: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

**ATTACHMENTS**

**ATTACHMENT A** s 47C

**ATTACHMENT B** s 47B(a)



MS23-000603

## COVID-19 RESPONSE INQUIRY OPTIONS

Prime Minister, we recommend you:

s 47C , s 47E(d)

s 34(3)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

ANTHONY ALBANESE

Date:

19/7/23

Comments:

### KEY POINTS

1. s 47C

2. Your Government has previously indicated it would conduct an inquiry into Australia's COVID-19 response.

- a. As you will be aware, there has already been a wide range of reviews on the COVID-19 response in Australia. A summary of these reviews is provided at Attachment A.
- b. All states and territories have conducted – or are in the process of conducting – inquiries into different aspects of their own COVID-19 responses. A summary of state and territory specific reviews is provided at Attachment B.

3. s 47C

8. s 47C

9.

#### **Risks and Sensitivities**

10. s 47C

#### **Financial Implications**

s 47C

#### **Consultation**

PM&C DIVISIONS – Resilience and Crisis Management Division, Government Division

DEPARTMENTS – Nil

**Russell de Burgh**

Assistant Secretary

Health and Aged Care Branch

30 June 2023

**Policy Officer:** s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Phone no: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

#### **Circulation**

PM&C Secretary, Davis; Deputy Secretary, Social Policy, Hefren-Webb; First Assistant Secretary, Intergovernmental Relations and Reform, Steel; Assistant Secretary, Health and Aged Care, de Burgh; Assistant Secretary, Fiscal Policy, Neil; First Assistant Secretary, Cabinet, McGregor; Assistant Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat, Hupalo; First Assistant Secretary, Ministerial Support, Martin.

PMO Chief of Staff; s 22(1)(a)(ii)

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**ATTACHMENT A SUMMARY OF KEY COVID-19 RESPONSE REVIEWS**

**ATTACHMENT B SUMMARY OF STATE AND TERRITORY GOVERNMENT COVID-19  
RESPONSE REVIEWS**

**ATTACHMENT C s 47C**

Name of the review/inquiry	Department/Agency/Organisation	Length of inquiry, by completion date	Scope/Terms of Reference	Key findings/outcomes	Links including Government response (if any)
<i>Australian Government Crisis Management Framework Review</i>	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	Due for completion in December 2023	PM&C is leading a comprehensive review of the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework, which provides the strategic framework under which the Commonwealth coordinates its response to significant crises. This review will include consideration of relevant lessons from recent national crises including the COVID-19 pandemic.	No findings are yet available as the review is ongoing.	N/A
<i>Parliamentary Inquiry into Long COVID and Repeated Infections</i>	Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport	Sept 2022 to February 2023	The Committee undertook an inquiry into report on Long COVID and repeated COVID infections.	The Committee published its report <i>Sick and tired: Casting a long shadow</i> on 24 April 2023. The report made a range of recommendations from establishing a better COVID and long COVID data collection system through to funding more research into myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS).	<a href="https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Health_Aged_Care_and_Sport/Long_and_repeated_COVID/Report">https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Health_Aged_Care_and_Sport/Long_and_repeated_COVID/Report</a>
s 47C					
<i>Evaluation of COVID-19 point-of-care testing (POCT) in remote and First Nations communities</i>	Nous Group Pty Ltd	September - December 2022	The evaluation assessed the appropriateness, implementation, and effectiveness of the POCT Program in remote communities, focusing on improved health outcomes for First Nations people due to improved access to testing.	The evaluation found the Program to be successful. It provided eight recommendations that could be applied to a broader rollout of the Program and similar programs in remote First Nations communities.	TBC pending publication. The evaluation can be provided on request.
<i>Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) COVID-19 Intra-Action Review January 2020-September 2022</i>	Cth Department of Health and Aged Care	November 2022	The Intra-Action Review (IAR), undertaken by the Office of Health Protection and Response (OHPR), sought to analyse the capacity, authority and influence of the advice of AHPPC, and compile and apply lessons identified.	Four key recommendations were made in relation to the structure and relationships of the AHPPC, data used to inform decision making and the use of the expertise, information and data.	Internal review – not published
<i>Fault Lines: An Independent review into Australia's response to COVID-19</i>	The Paul Ramsay Foundation, the Minderoo Foundation and the John and Myriam Wylie Foundation	April to October 2022	Comprehensive review of the Commonwealth and state and territory government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, including its impact on society and the economy.	The review made six recommendations ranging from strengthening crisis preparation through to building a culture of real-time evaluation and learning in the public sector.	Report: <a href="https://paulramsayfoundation.org.au">Fault Lines: an independent review into Australia's response to COVID-19</a> (paulramsayfoundation.org.au)
<i>Review of COVID-19 Vaccine and Treatment Purchasing and Procurement</i>	Cth Department of Health and Aged Care	June to September 2022	Review of the procurement and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines and relevant therapeutic goods to ensure that Australia has sufficient supplies to meet immediate and prospective needs including for the next 12-18 months.	The recommendations cover the need for public health campaigns around vaccine uptake, an updated COVID-19 policy framework, the streamlining of advisory structures, a review of vaccine distribution arrangements, and the need to ensure adequate supplies of therapeutics and vaccines across 2023 and 2024, among other things.	Report: <a href="#">Halton review into vaccine and treatment procurement   Health Portfolio Ministers and Aged Care</a>



Name of the review/inquiry	Department/Agency/Organisation	Length of inquiry, by completion date	Scope/Terms of Reference	Key findings/outcomes	Links including Government response (if any)
<i>Senate Select Committee Report on COVID-19</i>	Senate Committee	April 2020 to April 2022	The Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic	Key recommendations include the establishment of the Australian Centre for Disease Control; for the Australian Government to report to the Parliament at least every two years, commencing in 2024, on the state of Australian pandemic preparedness; and for the Australian Government to deliver immediate improvements including a pandemic workforce strategy, an agreement with the Commonwealth and states on the responsibilities of different levels of government for preparedness and response during a pandemic.	Report: <a href="#">Chapter 1 – Parliament of Australia (aph.gov.au)</a>
<i>Issues paper: The impact of and responses to the Omicron wave of the COVID-19 pandemic for people with disability</i>	Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (DRC)	March 2022	The Royal Commission sought to better understand the impacts of the current wave of the pandemic on people with disability, the effectiveness of government planning around the easing of COVID-19 restrictions and what is needed to protect people with disability from new COVID-19 variants and future waves of the virus.	NDIS participants experienced difficulties finding replacement support works and were negatively impacted by a lack of access to PPE, RATS and other necessary equipment was also raised as an issue. Advocates urged governments to provide clear guidance to people with disability, families, services and support workers on how to prevent and manage COVID-19 infections in the home.	<a href="#">The impact of and responses to the Omicron wave of the COVID-19 pandemic for people with disability Issues paper (royalcommission.gov.au)</a>
<i>Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) – Phase 1 and 2 Audits</i>	ANAO	2020-22	Phase 1 focused on the Australian Government's early response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the role of the Australian Taxation Office and Services Australia; procurement and deployment of the National Medical Stockpile and the approach taken to position the Australian Public Service to quickly implement new measures. Phase 2 focused on the governance arrangements and coordination; preparedness and planning; fraud and compliance in high volume processing programs; proper use of public resources; regulatory responses, such as in border protection and biosecurity; information services to citizens; financial assistance to individuals and to support the economy; grants; and planning for transition to business as usual.	Phase 1: The Auditor-General made no recommendations but identified key messages for Australian Government entities relating to governance, risk management and policy implementation. Phase 2: The Auditor General has made several recommendations in regards to international travel restrictions, biosecurity governance arrangements, COVID-19 vaccine rollout, management of Australians stranded overseas, telehealth services, and support to the aviation sector.	Reports: <a href="#">COVID-19   Australian National Audit Office (ANAO)</a>
<i>Experiences of people with disability during the COVID-19 pandemic (in the AIHW web report People with disability in Australia)</i>	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	2020-2022	Specific section on COVID-19 experiences completed looks at various impacts of COVID-19 on people with disability, and how these compared with people without disability.	Adults with disability experienced worse physical and mental health outcomes, social isolation and declines in household finances than adults without disability during the COVID-19 pandemic.	<a href="#">People with disability in Australia, Experiences of people with disability during COVID-19 pandemic - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (aihw.gov.au)</a>
<i>Pandemic Preparedness and Resilience Review (the Review) – Internal Lessons Learned in Closing and Reopening the</i>	Department of Home Affairs (the Department)	2022	The Department conducted an internal review of lessons learnt in closing and reopening the international border during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Review primarily focused on ensuring the appropriate level of preparedness to manage the pandemic related risk and enable effective, coordinated and expedient reintroduction of border	The Lessons Learnt Report identified 13 recommended actions that focus on governance and whole-of-Government decision-making, crisis management arrangements, opportunities for legislative reform, health intelligence, resource constraints, digital capabilities, industry engagement and communications.	Not published. Please contact S 47E(d) [redacted] if you require a copy of the Lessons Learnt Report.



Name of the review/inquiry	Department/Agency/Organisation	Length of inquiry, by completion date	Scope/Terms of Reference	Key findings/outcomes	Links including Government response (if any)
<i>International Border 2020-2022 Report (the Lessons Learnt Report)</i>			measures should they be required to address emergent health risks.		
<i>Independent review of COVID-19 outbreaks in Australian Residential Aged Care Facilities</i>	Professor Lyn Gilbert AO and Adjunct Professor Alan Lilly were commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Health to undertake this Independent Review	December 2020 – November 2021	This review was commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Health to examine lessons learned from COVID-19 outbreaks in residential aged care facilities in Australia and to make recommendations for continued improvement.	The review captured key findings in what described as the nine lines of defence against the risk of COVID-19 outbreaks and expressed them using the analogy of the Swiss Cheese model.	Report: <a href="#">Independent Review COVID-19 outbreaks in Australian Residential Aged Care Facilities (health.gov.au)</a>
<i>National Review of Quarantine</i>	National Cabinet	July to October 2021	Quarantine arrangements in Australia	Key recommendations include for all governments to commit to improved and timely information sharing, including the establishment of a common quarantine dataset to determine quarantine capacity and allocations; for National Cabinet to commit to five COVID-19 quarantine principles, a risk-based quarantine framework that stratifies travellers based on risk and a staged approach to step down quarantine requirements in line with the National Plan.	Report: <a href="#">National Review of Quarantine (pmc.gov.au)</a>
<i>Public hearings 5 and 12 Experiences of people with disability during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic</i>	Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (DRC)	August 2021	These hearings focussed on the experiences of people with disability during the pandemic and the Australian Government's responses that directly affected people with disability. Hearing 12 included consideration of the vaccine rollout.	It was noted that the impact of the pandemic on many people with disability, especially those with high support needs, would have been significantly ameliorated if the Australian Government had complied fully with obligations under the <i>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i> from the outset of the pandemic.  It was noted that was a failure to seek advice and guidance from the disability community at critical points in the development of the vaccine strategy and its subsequent rollout. There was a lack of transparency in decision-making on the rollout and information in accessible form which contributed to many people with disability losing trust in the Australian Government's handling of the early stages of the vaccine rollout.	<a href="#">Public hearing report: Public hearing 5 Experiences of people with disability during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (royalcommission.gov.au)</a> <a href="#">Report - Public hearing 12 - The experiences of people with disability, in the context of the Australian Government's approach to the COVID 19 vaccine rollout (royalcommission.gov.au)</a>
<i>Independent Review into COVID-19 Outbreaks in Australian Residential Aged Care Facilities</i>	Professor Lyn Gilbert and Adjunct Professor Alan Lilly	December 2020 to April 2021	The review was conducted to build on existing literature about COVID-19, including earlier reviews into outbreaks in RACFs, to increase the resilience of the sector to prepare for and manage future outbreaks.	The National Review identified 38 recommendations about critical factors, which can increase the likelihood of rapid detection and timely remediation or response from providers, with the support of relevant government agencies if required, in managing future COVID-19 or other infectious disease outbreaks.	Report: <a href="#">Independent Review COVID-19 outbreaks in Australian Residential Aged Care Facilities (health.gov.au)</a>
<i>Analysis of Australia's food security and the</i>	ABARES – The then Department of Agriculture, Water	April 2021	The paper considers Australia's food security status resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.	Despite temporary shortages of some food items in supermarkets caused by an unexpected surge in demand, it was found that Australia does not have a food security problem. Disruptions were temporary and due to logistics taking time to adapt to the unexpected surge in purchasing.	Report: <a href="#">Analysis of Australia's food security and the COVID-19</a>



Name of the review/inquiry	Department/Agency/Organisation	Length of inquiry, by completion date	Scope/Terms of Reference	Key findings/outcomes	Links including Government response (if any)
<i>COVID-19 pandemic</i>	and the Environment				<a href="#">pandemic - DAFF (agriculture.gov.au)</a>
<i>Confidence testing for at-border delivery of critical human biosecurity functions – Ruby Princess cruise ship incident</i>	Inspector-General of Biosecurity	April 2021	The Inspector-General's review investigated the Department of Agriculture's ability to progress with Health portfolio changes that will improve Agriculture's ability to operationally deliver human biosecurity policies and regulations that are managed by the Health portfolio.	The review found that the Department of Agriculture must strengthen arrangements for intercepting Listed Human Diseases and human biosecurity risk material to ensure that efforts are being directed to areas of highest risk. The report includes 42 recommendations to improve the management of human biosecurity in the Vessels Pathway.	<a href="#">Inspector-General of Biosecurity review of at-border delivery of human biosecurity functions – Ruby Princess cruise ship incident</a>
<i>Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety</i>	Honourable Tony Pagone QC, and Ms Lynelle Briggs AO	2018-2021	A special hearing was held in August 2020 as part of the Commissioners' investigation into the response to COVID-19 in aged care.	Following the COVID-19 hearing, the Commissioners released a special report on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in aged care, making 10 recommendations. This included arranging for the deployment of accredited infection prevention and control experts into residential aged care facilities.	Report: <a href="#">Aged Care and Covid-19: a special report</a> Government Response: <a href="#">Australian Government Implementation Progress Report</a>
<i>Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response</i>	World Health Organization (WHO)	2020-21	The Independent Panel on Pandemic Preparedness and Response (IPPR) was established by the World Health Assembly to review the international response to COVID-19.	The IPPR submitted its final report to the World Health Assembly in May 2021. It made seven key recommendations, which are being taken forward by Member States through global health reform processes under the auspices of WHO.	Report: <a href="#">COVID-19: Make it the Last Pandemic</a>
<i>Forward Impact of COVID-19 on Australian Higher Education</i>	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TESQA); Wells Advisory	July 2021 to October 2021	Wells Advisory was commissioned by TEQSA in July 2021 to undertake the analysis. The purpose of the analysis was to broaden understanding of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Australia's higher education system.	It was found impact of COVID-19 will be uneven across the sector – different levels of exposure to international students, and different delivery models (including pre-COVID investment in transnational education) will lead to varying outcomes.	Report: <a href="#">Forward Impact of COVID-19 on Australian Higher Education</a>
<i>Independent review of COVID-19 outbreaks in Australian Residential Aged Care Facilities</i>	Professor Lyn Gilbert AO and Adjunct Professor Alan Lilly, commissioned by the Cth Dept of Health	September – November 2020	The Department of Health commissioned an independent review into COVID-19 outbreaks at St Basil's Home for the Aged in Fawkner, and Heritage Care Epping Gardens.	This review highlighted some of the multiple factors at play in managing COVID19 outbreaks and builds on the previous reviews at the Dorothy Henderson Lodge and Newmarch House. Whilst improvements have been observed and new lessons identified, there is an ongoing challenge to drive and embed consistent improvement across the aged care sector.	Report: <a href="#">coronavirus-covid-19-independent-review-of-covid-19-outbreaks-at-st-basil-s-and-epping-gardens-aged-care-facilities.pdf (health.gov.au)</a>
<i>National Review of Hotel Quarantine</i>	Cth Department of Health	July to October 2020	Hotel quarantine arrangements	Key recommendations include for states and territories to embed end-to-end assurance mechanisms and continuously improve hotel quarantine; for information on quarantine to be easy to access; for people in quarantine to have access to timely decision-making, review processes and complaints mechanisms.	Report: <a href="#">Final Report - National Review of Hotel Quarantine 01 10 20 4AM (health.gov.au)</a>
<i>More than isolated: the experience of children and young people with disability and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic</i>	Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA)	11 March 2020 – 20 May 2020	Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, CYDA identified an urgent need for more information on how the families of children and young people with disability were being affected and the steps needed to fill any emerging gaps.	CYDA found children and young people with disability and their families experienced a range of health issues. This included a decline in their mental health, inability to access COVID-19 testing and telehealth and fear of engaging with health services.	<a href="#">covid report compressed 1.pdf (cyda.org.au)</a>
<i>The impact of learning at home on the educational outcomes of</i>	National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE)	April 2020	Impact of COVID on vulnerable cohorts	This review provides an overview of current approaches to managing school closures as well as recent literature related to young people learning "outside of school".	<a href="#">The impact of 'learning at home' on the educational outcomes of vulnerable children in Australia during</a>

Name of the review/inquiry	Department/Agency/Organisation	Length of inquiry, by completion date	Scope/Terms of Reference	Key findings/outcomes	Links including Government response (if any)
<i>vulnerable children in Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic</i>					<a href="#">the COVID-19 pandemic - NCSEHE</a> .
<i>Impact of JobSeeker and JobKeeper payments on measures of poverty and housing stress</i>	ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods	2020	Impact of JobSeeker and JobKeeper payments on measures of poverty and housing stress	It was found changes in JobSeeker and JobKeeper payments reduced measures of poverty and housing stress, below what they were prior to the onset of COVID-19.	<a href="#">Impact of Covid19 JobKeeper and Jobseeker measures on Poverty and Financial Stress FINAL.pdf (anu.edu.au)</a>

s 47C



## State and Territory Government Reviews

Name of the review/inquiry	Department/Agency/Organisation	Length of inquiry/Completion Date	Scope/Terms of Reference	Key findings/outcomes	Links
New South Wales					
<i>Inquiry into the NSW Government's management of the COVID-19 pandemic</i>	NSW Parliament Public Accountability Committee	2020-21	That the Public Accountability Committee inquire into and report on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>any matter relating to the NSW Government's management of the COVID-19 pandemic;</li> <li>any other related matter; and</li> <li>that the committee reports by 30 June 2021, or such other date as the committee decides.</li> </ul>	This inquiry allowed for ongoing parliamentary scrutiny of the government's response to the pandemic in New South Wales in the absence of the House sitting. A report of findings was not produced, but issues raised at hearings are summarised in the linked document.	<a href="#">NSW Government's management of the COVID-19 pandemic</a>
<i>2020 Hindsight: The first 12 months of the COVID-19 pandemic.</i>	NSW Ombudsman	2020-21	The report considered what the NSW Ombudsman saw in terms of complaints about the actions taken by NSW Government agencies during the first 12 months of the pandemic.	The report noted that key insights include the need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>include, as an integrated part of crisis planning and response, comprehensive consideration of oversight and complaint handling mechanisms</li> <li>provide clear information to the public about how to access information, or complain, about their treatment or related issues.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">2020 hindsight - the first 12 months of the COVID-19 pandemic - NSW Ombudsman</a>
<i>The Special Commission of Inquiry into the Ruby Princess</i>	NSW Government/ Department of Premier and Cabinet	April 2020	The inquiry investigated the voyage of the Ruby Princess, specifically decisions of State and Commonwealth authorities and Carnival Australia.	Key findings include (but are not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That passengers, under the Public Health Order at the time, should not have been allowed to travel interstate or internationally upon disembarkation.</li> <li>That Human Biosecurity Officers, DAWE, NSW Health, and the Commonwealth Department of Health developed better understanding of their own and each other's roles and responsibilities.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">The Special Commission of Inquiry into the Ruby Princess - Premier &amp; Cabinet (nsw.gov.au)</a>
<i>NSW Health response to final report of the independent review into the Newmarch House COVID-19 outbreak</i>	The review was undertaken by Professor Lyn Gilbert and Adjunct Professor Alan Lilly	April – August 2020	An independent review into the COVID-19 outbreak at Newmarch House was commissioned by the NSW Department of Health to understand what occurred and what could be learned from the experience.  Also published is the NSW Health response to the final report of the independent review into the Newmarch House COVID-19 outbreak.	The report notes the apparent lack of preparedness of residential aged care facilities.	<a href="#">Report: Secretary signoff (health.gov.au)</a>
Victoria					
<i>Review of COVID-19 Communications in Victoria</i>	Independent Pandemic Management Advisory Committee (IPMAC)	September 2022	The review explores how pandemic orders made by the Minister for Health, through the exercise of powers under the PHW Act from 15 December 2021 to 12 July 2022, have been communicated to the Victorian community	The Review made six recommendations, all concerned with communication.	<a href="#">Review of COVID-19 Communications in Victoria   health.vic.gov.au</a>
<i>Investigation into decision-making under the Victorian Border Crossing Permit Directions</i>	Victorian Ombudsman	December 2021	The Ombudsman investigated the Department of Health's exercise of discretion involving decisions on interstate travel permits, exceptions and exemptions and relevant human rights considerations.	The Ombudsman recommended the Victorian Government publicly acknowledge that the narrow exercise of discretion resulted in unjust outcomes and consider measures to alleviate this. Among other things, the Ombudsman also recommended a clarifying amendment to the right to freedom of movement under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic), and that policies be developed under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic) to assist decision-makers in the future.	<a href="#">Investigation into decision-making under the Victorian Border Crossing Permit Directions   Victorian Ombudsman</a>
<i>Inquiry into the Victorian Government's response to the</i>	Public Accounts and Estimates Committee	August 2021	The Public Accounts and Estimates Committee agreed to review and report to the Parliament on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the responses taken by the Victorian Government, including as part of the National</li> </ul>	Key findings include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>governance arrangements were very complex</li> <li>contract tracing efforts were hampered by limited information technology capability</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Inquiry into the Victorian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic (parliament.vic.gov.au)</a>



COVID-19 pandemic			<p>Cabinet, to manage the COVID-19 pandemic and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>any other matter related to the COVID-19 pandemic</li> <li>up to each reporting date of the Committee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>healthcare workers made up 18% of infections (as at November 2020) with 69% likely being acquired in the workplace. Workers experience disparate outcomes trying to access PPE</li> <li>aged care residents were disproportionately impacted</li> <li>the mental health of many Victorians was negatively impacted and long-term support will be necessary.</li> </ul>	
COVID-19 Hotel Quarantine Inquiry	The Hon. Jennifer Coate AO Board of Inquiry	December 2020	<p>This Inquiry was established on 2 July 2020 to examine a range of matters related to the Program, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>decisions and actions of government agencies, hotel operators and private contractors</li> <li>communication between government agencies, hotel operators and private contractors.</li> </ul>	<p>The Inquiry delivered 69 recommendations, which went towards ensuring that a robust and safe quarantine system could be developed and implemented in Victoria (i.e. regarding the physical environment, personnel, health and wellbeing, home quarantine models).</p>	<a href="#">COVID-19 Hotel Quarantine Inquiry</a>
Investigation into the detention and treatment of public housing residents arising from a COVID-19 'hard lockdown' in July 2020	Victorian Ombudsman	December 2020	<p>On 16 July 2020, the Ombudsman decided to conduct an 'own motion' investigation into the treatment of people at 33 Alfred Street, looking at whether imposition of the lockdown complied with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic).</p>	<p>This investigation made a number of recommendations, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>amending the <i>Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008</i> (Vic) to strengthen a person in detention's rights</li> <li>Develop and implement guidelines, procedures and training relation the the exercise of the emergency detention power identified in the Act</li> <li>Strengthen the Department of Health and Human Services' ability to perform health emergency management functions</li> <li>Clarify the process for making complaints about actions taken under the Act (and publish this)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Investigation into the detention and treatment of public housing residents arising from a COVID-19 'hard lockdown' in July 2020   Victorian Ombudsman</a>
Inquiry into the Victorian Government's COVID-19 contact tracing system and testing regime	The Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee	December 2020	<p>The inquiry considered the capacity and fitness for purpose of the Victorian Government's COVID-19 contact tracing system and testing regime, and in doing so consult with businesses, including small business representatives, the community sector and Victoria's multicultural communities, and provide a report to the House no later than 14 December 2020</p>	<p>Key recommendations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication about contact tracing and testing</li> <li>Incorporating wastewater testing into ongoing surveillance</li> <li>Establishing a trained reserve workforce for future health emergencies</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Inquiry into the Victorian Government's COVID-19 contact tracing system and testing regime (parliament.vic.gov.au)</a>
Queensland					
Wave of COVID-19 outbreaks in Gold Coast residential aged care facilities after easing travel restrictions into Queensland	Gold Coast Public Health Unit, Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service	13 December 2021 and 12 February 2022	<p>This audit reviewed all RACF COVID-19 outbreaks notified to the Gold Coast Public Health Unit between 13 December 2021 and 12 February 2022. An outbreak was defined by the Communicable Diseases Network Australia guidelines current at the time.</p>	<p>COVID-19 caused significant morbidity and mortality in Gold Coast RACFs following the easing of border restrictions. Higher rates of hospitalisation and death occurred in males than in females, and in under-vaccinated resident cases than in those vaccinated with at least two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.</p>	<a href="#">Wave of COVID-19 outbreaks in Gold Coast</a>
Joint agency review into the COVID-19 infection of a hotel worker (Hotel Grand Chancellor)	Queensland Health/ Queensland Police Service	January 2021	<p>The review considered a range of issues including genomic analysis, policies and procedures, CCTV, environmental factors, deep cleaning procedures, and infection prevention and control.</p>	<p>The review team found no direct evidence to explain the transmission of the COVID-19 virus between guests in the two rooms and the cleaner. In particular, there was no evidence of any intentional or reckless actions of any party. The review team were also able to exclude air conditioning as a cause. The report made a number of key recommendations for improving training, procedures and hotel quarantine compliance.</p>	<a href="https://www.health.qld.gov.au/research-reports/reports/review-investigation/joint-gh-qps-review-covid-19-infection-hotel-grand-chancellor">https://www.health.qld.gov.au/research-reports/reports/review-investigation/joint-gh-qps-review-covid-19-infection-hotel-grand-chancellor</a>
Queensland Government response to COVID-19	Queensland Audit Office	2020	<p>The objective of this topic overview is to identify the facts relating to the Queensland Government's response to COVID-19. This report provides a broad outline of government's activities in response to COVID-19, including estimated costs of those activities.</p>	<p>The report summarises the Queensland Government's response to COVID-19 and does not undertake analysis or make recommendations regarding the COVID-19 response. Key findings include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Queensland Government's COVID-19 Response cost over \$7 billion, including over \$1.2 billion for the health response.</li> <li>The response consisted of over 80 different measures between 1 February and 21 August 2020.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Queensland Government response to COVID-19   Queensland Audit Office (qao.qld.gov.au)</a>




South Australia					
Inquiry into South Australia's COVID-19 pandemic response	South Australian Emergency Management Committee	Ongoing	Strategic review will consider response during the Emergency Management Declaration from March 2020 to May 2022, in line with the State Emergency Plan.	TBC – the inquiry is ongoing.	TBC – inquiry website has not been established.
<i>Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on South Australia's emergency departments: evidence from two lockdowns</i>	CSIRO	2020	This study assessed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on emergency departments (EDs) in South Australia, measured by changes in the number and case mix of patients in the system over time.	This study demonstrated that South Australians are accessing emergency medical treatment differently in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings corroborated the national concern that unwell people have avoided accessing emergency medical care during the pandemic, leading to worse outcomes and increased need for healthcare resources at a later date.	<a href="#">CSIRO PUBLISHING   Australian Health Review</a>
Western Australia					
<i>Independent review into Western Australia's COVID-19 management and response</i>	Independent experts appointed by the Government of Western Australia	Ongoing	The independent experts will specifically review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The State's pandemic plans and preparedness;</li> <li>• Government programs and processes to support the health response;</li> <li>• Intragovernmental communication and cooperation;</li> <li>• Community support, engagement, and public health communication; and</li> <li>• Effectiveness of public health levers, including border control measures, on health outcomes.</li> </ul>	TBC – the inquiry is ongoing.	<a href="#">Media statements - Independent experts appointed to review Western Australia's COVID-19 management and response</a>
Tasmania					
<i>Report of the Auditor-General No. 10 of 2020-21: COVID-19 – Pandemic response and mobilisation</i>	Tasmanian Audit Office	2020-21	The review looked at how the lead agencies worked together to establish governance arrangements, deploy human resources, and maintain effective lines of communication, supported by information management. The review examined the mobilisation in the lead up to, and months following (up until the end of May 2020), the declarations of both a Public Health Emergency and State of Emergency in March 2020. It was confined to management at a state-wide level for the response and did not look in detail at regional responses.	Findings were made under key three areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Effectiveness of the activation of governance arrangements</li> <li>2. Sufficiency and effectiveness of the deployment of human resources</li> <li>3. Effectiveness of communication and information management</li> </ol>	<a href="#">COVID-19 – Pandemic response and mobilisation - Tasmanian Audit Office</a>
<i>Independent Review of the Response to the North-West Tasmania COVID-19 Outbreak</i>	Independent Review ordered by the Tasmanian Department of Premier and Cabinet.	2020	The Review considered the actions, and effectiveness of those actions, taken in response to the COVID-19 outbreak in North-West Tasmania by government agencies, public and private health care facilities and any other relevant authorities.	Recommendations included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• any future pandemic outbreaks across Tasmania (and the ongoing preparations for same) incorporate the formal input of health consumers into the emergency decision making process in real time.</li> <li>• the Department of Health work with appropriate organisations to better understand the health, social and economic impacts of the virus on health consumers.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Department of Premier and Cabinet (dpac.tas.gov.au)</a>

Australian Capital Territory					
<i>Inquiry into the COVID-19 2021 pandemic response</i>	Legislative Assembly ACT Select Committee on the COVID-19 2021 pandemic response	2021	The Legislative Assembly for the ACT established a select committee to consider and report to the Assembly on any matter relating to the ACT Government's health and financial response and any other matter relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, as it relates to the ACT.	Made 32 recommendations across a wide scale of legal and social impacts of government decisions.	<a href="#">Report-Inquiry-into-the-COVID-19-2021-pandemic-response-.pdf (act.gov.au)</a>
Northern Territory					
<i>Tanami mine COVID outbreak NT government response review</i>	Internal	2021	Internal review of the handling of the Tanami mine COVID-19 outbreak.	N/A – the review was not made public.	<a href="#">Media reporting</a>





MB23-000120

Signature Due Date: 20/9/2023 to enable announcement.

**COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT COVID-19 RESPONSE INQUIRY - INDEPENDENT  
PANEL APPOINTMENTS**

<b>Prime Minister, we recommend you:</b>	<b>Through: Cabinet Secretary</b>
1. Agree that the Commonwealth Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry (the Inquiry) will run from 2 October 2023 to 30 September 2024.	<b>Agreed / Not Agreed</b>
2. Sign the instruments of appointment at <u>Attachment A</u> appointing Ms Robyn Kruk AO as Chair of the Commonwealth Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry Independent Panel (the Independent Panel) and Professor Catherine Bennett and Dr Angela Jackson as members of the Independent Panel from 2 October 2023 to 30 September 2024.	<b>Signed / Not Signed</b>
3. Sign the letters of appointment at <u>Attachment B</u> to Ms Robyn Kruk AO, Professor Catherine Bennett and Dr Angela Jackson informing them of their successful appointments. s 22(1)(a)(ii)	<b>Signed / Not Signed</b>
	<b>19/8/23</b>
ANTHONY ALBANESE	Date:
<b>Comments:</b>	

**KEY POINTS**

1. s 34(3)  
  
s 34(3) s 34(2) s 34(3)  
s 34(3)  

2. s 47C  

3. Your Office has advised that you will announce the establishment of the Inquiry and membership of the Independent Panel on Wednesday, 20 September 2023 (a separate event brief, MB23-000159, is being prepared to support this announcement).
4. We recommend you sign the instruments of appointment at Attachment A and letters at Attachment B.  
s 47C  
a.   
b. All candidates have confirmed their availability for appointment and all necessary appointment information documentation has been completed (Attachments C, D and E).



c. s 47C

5. Collectively, the proposed appointees have experience across the Inquiry Terms of Reference (Attachment D) with public health, government and economic expertise:

- a. Ms Robyn Kruk AO has a wealth of experience in government, including as Director-General of the NSW Department of Health; Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts; and CEO of the National Mental Health Commission. Ms Kruk also has experience leading independent reviews including the Independent Review of Health Practitioner Regulatory Settings.
- b. Professor Catherine Bennett has expertise in epidemiology as Deakin University's current Chair in Epidemiology and the University of Melbourne's former Associate Professor in Epidemiology and Director of Population Health Practice. Professor Bennett also has experience in the New South Wales and Victorian state governments in a variety of senior positions.
- c. Dr Angela Jackson is a health economist with extensive experience in economics and government, including through her current role as lead economist for Impact Economics and Policy. Dr Jackson is a member of the Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee and is the National Chair of the Women in Economics Network. Dr Jackson was also previously a Board Member and Chair of the Finance Committee at the Royal Melbourne Hospital from 2015-2021.

6. While all of the panel members have identified private interests, these interests would not necessarily preclude their appointments, noting the scale of the pandemic meant most eminent Australians had some interaction with the Commonwealth Government response.

s 47E(d)

s 47E(d) s 47E  
s 47E

7. PM&C will work with the panel members to identify mitigation strategies where a real, potential or perceived conflict is identified.

8. s 47C

s 47C

## SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

9. The Inquiry will be forward-looking and focus on better preparing Australia for future pandemics. It will consider all Commonwealth Government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, both health and non-health responses, and what worked well overseas. Assistance for Australians at home and abroad would be in scope but assistance to foreign countries would not be in scope.
10. The Inquiry will also consider national governance arrangements supporting COVID-19 responses (such as National Cabinet) and the role of the Commonwealth as compared to states and territories in responding to future pandemics. It will not review actions taken unilaterally by states and territories.
11. The Independent Panel will consult with relevant experts, the public and people with a diverse range of backgrounds, and will be supported by a taskforce in PM&C. The Final Report will be delivered to Government by 30 September 2024.

## Risks and Sensitivities

s 47C

s 34(3)

## Consultation

PM&C DIVISIONS – Cab Div, Gov Div, OfW, Eco Div, SPD

**Kim Dobbie**

A/g Assistant Secretary

Health and Aged Care Branch

19 September 2023

**Policy Officer:** s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Phone no: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

## Circulation

PM&C Secretary; Deputy Secretary, Social Policy, Hefren-Webb; First Assistant Secretary, Intergovernmental Relations and Reform, Steel; A/g Assistant Secretary, Health and Aged Care, Dobbie; Assistant Secretary, Fiscal Policy, Neil; First Assistant Secretary, Cabinet, Hupalo; Assistant Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat, Hogben; First Assistant Secretary, Ministerial Support Division, Martin

PMO Chief of Staff; s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Cabinet Secretary s 22(1)(a)(ii)

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**ATTACHMENT A INSTRUMENTS OF APPOINTMENT**

**ATTACHMENT B LETTERS TO APPOINTEES**

**ATTACHMENT C MS KRUK APPOINTMENT DOCUMENTATION (APPOINTMENT  
DETAILS FORMS, CVS, PRIVATE INTERESTS DECLARATIONS)**

**ATTACHMENT D PROFESSOR BENNETT APPOINTMENT DOCUMENTATION  
(APPOINTMENT DETAILS FORMS, CVS, PRIVATE INTERESTS  
DECLARATIONS)**

**ATTACHMENT E DR JACKSON APPOINTMENT DOCUMENTATION (APPOINTMENT  
DETAILS FORMS, CVS, PRIVATE INTERESTS DECLARATIONS)**

**ATTACHMENT F COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT COVID-19 RESPONSE INQUIRY  
TERMS OF REFERENCE**






## **Commonwealth Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry Independent Panel (Chair) Appointment (No. 1) 2023**

I, ANTHONY NORMAN ALBANESE, Prime Minister of Australia, appoint Ms Robyn Kruk AO as Chair of the Commonwealth Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry Independent Panel, on a part-time basis, for a period commencing 2 October 2023 and ending 30 September 2024.

Note: The Commonwealth Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry Independent Panel is established to provide advice to Government on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to improve Australia's preparedness for future pandemics.

**19 SEP 2023**

Dated  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

 Anthony Norman Albanese  
Prime Minister



## **Commonwealth Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry Independent Panel (Member) Appointment (No. 1) 2023**

I, ANTHONY NORMAN ALBANESE, Prime Minister of Australia, appoint Professor Catherine Bennett as a member of the Commonwealth Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry Independent Panel, on a part-time basis, for a period commencing 2 October 2023 and ending 30 September 2024.

Note: The Commonwealth Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry Independent Panel is established to provide advice to Government on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to improve Australia's preparedness for future pandemics.

**19 SEP 2023**

Dated  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Anthony Norman Albanese  
Prime Minister



## **Commonwealth Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry Independent Panel (Member) Appointment (No. 2) 2023**

I, ANTHONY NORMAN ALBANESE, Prime Minister of Australia, appoint Dr Angela Jackson as a member of the Commonwealth Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry Independent Panel, on a part-time basis, for a period commencing 2 October 2023 and ending 30 September 2024.

Note: The Commonwealth Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry Independent Panel is established to provide advice to Government on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to improve Australia's preparedness for future pandemics.

**19 SEP 2023**

Dated

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Anthony Norman Albanese  
Prime Minister



**PRIME MINISTER**  
The Hon Anthony Albanese MP

Reference: MB23-000120

Professor Catherine Bennett  
s 47F

Dear Professor Bennett

I am pleased to advise that you have been appointed as Chair of the Australian Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry Independent Panel (Independent Panel) on a part-time basis from 2 October 2023 to 30 September 2024. A copy of the instrument of your appointment is enclosed for your reference.

The Australian Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry (the Inquiry) will identify lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to improve Australia's preparedness for future pandemics. The Independent Panel will deliver a Final Report to Government with recommendations to improve Australia's preparedness for future pandemics by the end of September 2024. A copy of the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry is enclosed.

The Independent Panel will be chaired by Ms Robyn Kruk AO and supported by a taskforce within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

s 47F , s 47E(d)

Staff from PM&C will be in contact to provide additional details and seek your formal agreement to an Engagement Deed. If you have any questions in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact Ms Kim Dobbie, A/g Assistant Secretary, Health and Aged Care Branch on s 22(1)(a)(ii) or at [kim.dobbie@pmc.gov.au](mailto:kim.dobbie@pmc.gov.au).

Yours sincerely  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

ANTHONY ALBANESE

Encl.





**PRIME MINISTER**  
The Hon Anthony Albanese MP

Reference: MB23-000120

Ms Robyn Kruk AO  
s 47F

Dear Ms Kruk

I am pleased to advise that you have been appointed as Chair of the Australian Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry Independent Panel (Independent Panel) on a part-time basis from 2 October 2023 to 30 September 2024. A copy of the instrument of your appointment is enclosed for your reference.

The Australian Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry (the Inquiry) will identify lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to improve Australia's preparedness for future pandemics. The Independent Panel will deliver a Final Report to Government with recommendations to improve Australia's preparedness for future pandemics by the end of September 2024. A copy of the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry is enclosed.

The Independent Panel will be supported by a taskforce within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C).

s 47F , s 47E(d)

Staff from PM&C will be in contact to provide additional details and seek your formal agreement to an Engagement Deed. If you have any questions in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact Ms Kim Dobbie, A/g Assistant Secretary, Health and Aged Care Branch on s 22(1)(a)(ii) or at [kim.dobbie@pmc.gov.au](mailto:kim.dobbie@pmc.gov.au).

Yours sincerely  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

ANTHONY ALBANESE

Encl.



PRIME MINISTER  
The Hon Anthony Albanese MP

Reference: MB23-000120

Dr Angela Jackson  
s 47F

Dear Dr Jackson

I am pleased to advise that you have been appointed as Chair of the Australian Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry Independent Panel (Independent Panel) on a part-time basis from 2 October 2023 to 30 September 2024. A copy of the instrument of your appointment is enclosed for your reference.

The Australian Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry (the Inquiry) will identify lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to improve Australia's preparedness for future pandemics. The Independent Panel will deliver a Final Report to Government with recommendations to improve Australia's preparedness for future pandemics by the end of September 2024. A copy of the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry is enclosed.

The Independent Panel will be chaired by Ms Robyn Kruk AO and supported by a taskforce within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

s 47F , s 47E(d)

Staff from PM&C will be in contact to provide additional details and seek your formal agreement to an Engagement Deed. If you have any questions in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact Ms Kim Dobbie, A/g Assistant Secretary, Health and Aged Care Branch on s 22(1)(a)(ii) or at [kim.dobbie@pmc.gov.au](mailto:kim.dobbie@pmc.gov.au).

Yours sincerely  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

ANTHONY ALBANESE

Encl.

# COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT COVID-19 RESPONSE INQUIRY

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

The purpose of the Commonwealth Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry is to identify lessons learned to improve Australia's preparedness for future pandemics.

### **Scope**

The Inquiry will review the Commonwealth Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and make recommendations to improve response measures in the event of future pandemics. It will consider opportunities for systems to more effectively anticipate, adapt and respond to pandemics in areas of Commonwealth Government responsibility.

The Inquiry will adopt a whole-of-government view in recognition of the wide-ranging impacts of COVID-19 across portfolios and the community. Specific areas of review may include, but are not limited to:

- Governance including the role of the Commonwealth Government, responsibilities of state and territory governments, national governance mechanisms (such as National Cabinet, the National Coordination Mechanism and the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee) and advisory bodies supporting responses to COVID-19.
- Key health response measures (for example across COVID-19 vaccinations and treatments, key medical supplies such as personal protective equipment, quarantine facilities, and public health messaging).
- Broader health supports for people impacted by COVID-19 and/or lockdowns (for example mental health and suicide prevention supports, and access to screening and other preventive health measures).
- International policies to support Australians at home and abroad (including with regard to international border closures, and securing vaccine supply deals with international partners for domestic use in Australia).
- Support for industry and businesses (for example responding to supply chain and transport issues, addressing labour shortages, and support for specific industries).
- Financial support for individuals (including income support payments).
- Community supports (across early childhood education and care, higher education, housing and homelessness measures, family and domestic violence measures in areas of Commonwealth Government responsibility).
- Mechanisms to better target future responses to the needs of particular populations (including across genders, age groups, socio-economic status, geographic location, people with disability, First Nations peoples and communities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities).



The Inquiry will consider the findings of previous relevant inquiries and reviews and identify knowledge gaps for further investigation. It will also consider the global experience and lessons learnt from other countries in order to improve response measures in the event of future global pandemics.

The following areas are not in scope for the Inquiry:

- Actions taken unilaterally by state and territory governments.
- International programs and activities assisting foreign countries.

### **Independent Panel**

The Prime Minister will appoint an Independent Panel of three eminent people to conduct the Inquiry. The Independent Panel will consult with relevant experts and people with a diverse range of backgrounds and lived experience.

### **Taskforce**

A Taskforce within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet will support the Independent Panel.

### **Public consultation**

Public consultation will be completed during the Inquiry on the substance of the issues outlined in the Terms of Reference. The Independent Panel may invite and publish submissions and seek information from any persons or bodies. Consultation will take place across Australia with:

- Key community and other stakeholders reflecting a diversity of backgrounds
- Experts
- Commonwealth Government and state and territory government agencies
- Members of the public

### **Final Report**

The Independent Panel will deliver a Final Report to Government including recommendations to the Commonwealth Government to improve Australia's preparedness for future pandemics by the end of September 2024.



**To:** Prime Minister

<b>SUBJECT:</b> Commonwealth COVID-19 Response Inquiry Announcement
<b>TIME/DATE:</b> Wednesday, 20 September 2023
<b>VENUE:</b> Hunter Region, New South Wales [PMO to confirm]

### Event Details

- The Commonwealth Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry (the Inquiry) will be announced at a press conference on Wednesday, 20 September 2023.

### Key Points


- The Government is launching an inquiry into the Commonwealth Government's COVID-19 response to identify lessons learned to improve Australia's future pandemic preparedness. It will look at both the health and non-health elements of the Commonwealth's COVID-19 response.
- The Inquiry will be led by an Independent Panel; comprised of Ms Robyn Kruk AO (Chair), Dr Angela Jackson and Professor Catherine Bennett.
- The Inquiry will commence on 2 October 2023, and deliver its Final Report to Government by 30 September 2024.

### Talking Points

(Further talking points to be provided by the Media Team)

- The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on the lives of all Australians.
- The Commonwealth responded to unprecedented health and economics challenges throughout the pandemic.
- Last year I committed to hold an inquiry into Australia's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now is the right time to take stock of how we responded to the pandemic and identify the lessons we have learned to improve our preparedness for future pandemics.
- I am pleased to announce the Inquiry will be led by an Independent Panel comprised of Ms Robyn Kruk AO, Dr Angela Jackson, and Professor Catherine Bennett.
- The Panel has vast experience in public health, government and economic expertise.
  - Ms Kruk has a wealth of experience in government and in leading independent reviews. Ms Kruk is a former Director-General of the NSW Department of Health, Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts and CEO of the National Mental Health Commission.
  - Dr Jackson is a health economist with extensive experience in economics and government. Dr Jackson is the lead economist for Impact Economics and Policy, a member of the Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee and the National Chair of the Women in Economics Network.
  - Professor Bennett is the Alfred Deakin Professor and Chair in Epidemiology at Deakin University. Professor Bennett was previously an Associate Professor in Epidemiology and the Director of Population Health Practice at the University of Melbourne and the founding Chair and President of the Council of Academic Public Health Institutions Australia.
- The Inquiry will commence on 2 October 2023, and deliver its Final Report to Government by 30 September 2024.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)



**Media**

- [Placeholder – PMO]

**Attendees**

- [Placeholder – PMO]

**Program/Running Sheet**

- [Placeholder – PMO]

**Kim Dobbie**

A/g Assistant Secretary

Health and Aged Care Branch

19 September 2023

**Contact Officer:** s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Phone no: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

**Circulation**

**PM&C** Secretary, Davis; Deputy Secretary, Social Policy, Hefren-Webb; First Assistant Secretary, Intergovernmental Relations and Reform, Steel; A/g Assistant Secretary, Health and Aged Care, Dobbie; Assistant Secretary, Fiscal Policy, Neil; First Assistant Secretary, Cabinet, McGregor; Assistant Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat, Hupalo; First Assistant Secretary, Ministerial Support, Martin.

**PMO** Chief of Staff; s 22(1)(a)(ii)

**Cabinet Secretary** s 22(1)(a)(ii)

**Other Offices** Strategic Communications Lead s 22(1)(a)(ii) Office of the Hon Mark Butler MP