



STUART GRIMLEY MP

Member for Western Victoria
State Leader of Derryn Hinch's Justice Party

MEDIA RELEASE



STATEMENT

October 27, 2021

Derryn Hinch's Justice Party opposes Victoria's pandemic-specific Bill

Derryn Hinch's Justice Party will not support the Victorian government's pandemic-specific Bill introduced to Parliament yesterday.

If passed, this Bill will give the government unprecedented powers over Victorians. Further, it would not even require a public health threat threshold test to determine pandemic risk before its powers were used.

We are elected Members of Parliament, yet we found out about the Bill's introduction and its contents from the media. The two of us represent more than a million enrolled electors, but we've been told we were not briefed on the bill because we opposed the state government's State of Emergency Bill in March last year and its extension five months later. What sort of a democracy is that?

If the intent of the Bill is to protect the public, then Victorians should be alarmed, as we are.

Additionally, this Bill allows the government to exclude unvaccinated people from entering certain venues, workplaces and events. In effect, it takes people's jobs from them. It must also be recognised that there are some people in our communities who are medically exempt from receiving the vaccine. We need to come together during a crisis and ensure that the most vulnerable are not alienated under any circumstances.

The Bill also allows the government to make decisions about 'certain classes of people' currently protected under the *Equal Opportunity Act* and to exclude them from certain activities and opportunities because of their race, gender, disability, political beliefs or other characteristics. We can't agree with this.

We instead believe that health advice to a government about a future pandemic threat should be answered with legislation tailored to it, and to that alone.

Derryn Hinch's Justice Party supports vaccination. We are vaccinated by choice, as are our staff. But as NSW moves to become 'one society' on December 1 – with no restriction between those who are vaccinated and those who are not – Victoria is heading in another direction. We're likely to achieve 90 per cent vaccination by November 24. Which begs the question, if we're vaccinated and doing the right thing because it's the right thing to do, why should we be giving the Premier and the (current or future) government unfettered new powers?



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Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen issues time and again with one person having exceptional power over Victorians. Further, the official advice handed to the government for the past 19 months has never been made public, and still we do not know if the government followed it or has made up restrictions as it decided.

Derryn Hinch's Justice Party prides itself on reviewing all legislation thoroughly and making informed decisions in the best interests of our constituents. We also pride ourselves on making the right decisions based on the principles and policies of our party, particularly around justice.

We know that's what all Victorians expect, and that's why it's the right thing to do.

ENDS

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