



Senator Malcolm Roberts
One Nation Senator for Queensland

25 March 2020

The Hon. Scott Morrison
Prime Minister
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

RE: COVID-19

Your Treasury staff are commended for the Coronavirus legislation package your government presented to the Senate on Monday 23 March 2020.

With the enormity of the challenge our country faces and the urgency to present your government's COVID-19 package we anticipated written legislation may have had a few ragged edges yet our office is impressed with your product's quality.

Although we disagree with some aspects of your Coronavirus support package, in the interests of ensuring swift support to the people of Australia whose lives have been jolted through loss of income we voted to support it in full.

We acknowledge that there is no manual on how to respond to the serious health and security crisis now confronting all Australians. The situation is dynamic and initially you needed to act promptly based on minimal data.

Fourthly and most importantly, overseas experience has now produced a large and growing yet still incomplete body of data, evidence and experience. Countries like Italy, France, Spain and possibly the USA and UK are floundering with healthcare systems either overwhelmed or facing overwhelm. They seem to have focussed on balancing human health against economic impact and in doing so have seriously compromised both.

Countries such as Italy aiming to mitigate the virus' impact and to "flatten the curve" are floundering and their people dying needlessly in droves.

It seems that South Korea started on Italy's path to disaster yet reportedly quickly learned from initial experience. It instituted massive body temperature testing of its people as a front-line filter to testing for COVID-19 that in turn led to isolation of people with the virus. People vulnerable to the virus were isolated as well. That apparently meant that the bulk of South Korea's workforce could return to work safely.

As expected countries such as South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore that are focussing their efforts on ensuring people's health and security are succeeding at protecting their people. A second benefit to protecting people is that through quickly getting people safely back to work these countries are suffering much less economic impact.

Having taken some time to appreciate your government's package and actions to date I am left wondering what strategy our country is following: the Italian and western strategy of **mitigation** or the South Korean and East Asian strategy of **virus suppression**?

It seems that your government has chosen a path similar to that of Italy that will soon lead to our health system being overwhelmed and in turn possibly lead to tens of thousands of needless and otherwise avoidable Australian deaths.

My experience across many fields shows accurate data is the key to making sound decisions and while we acknowledge the initial lack of data, we understand that data is now becoming available.

My son is a layperson and without medical qualifications yet his basic research alerted me to the dangers we face. Although I was initially blasé, my conversations with him prodded me to investigate further. The emerging data then swung me into realising that my initial response was wrong and that we must prioritise public health and safety as our primary goal.

I offer you the following articles that illustrate the concepts involved, the lessons that can be learned and provide empirical data.

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/medicine/sph/ide/gida-fellowships/Imperial-College-COVID19-NPI-modelling-16-03-2020.pdf>

<https://medium.com/@tomaspueyo/coronavirus-act-today-or-people-will-die-f4d3d9cd99ca>

<https://medium.com/@tomaspueyo/coronavirus-the-hammer-and-the-dance-be9337092b56>

Further, I strongly support mobilising our defence forces, and especially its well-trained medics and relocatable hospitals to strengthen virus hot-spots with front-line health care and triage that could ease the coming pressure on hospital emergency departments and Intensive Care Units.

Finally, I take this opportunity to stress that our country's future depends on restoring our national productive capacity and economic resilience that have been weakened severely over the last three decades. A second unfortunate result of the political mantra preaching globalisation and interdependence since World War Two has been dependence on foreign nations and corporations.

I believe that dependency and weakness need to be reversed. We must address this urgently and I am willing to assist in implementing policies based on solid data that will restore the fundamentals that people need to be productive, resilient and secure.

We remain ready to assist in the immediate and medium terms to bring back Australia.

Everyday Australians expect our governments to protect us and our economy.

I implore you to change strategy if required based on evaluating the emerging data and to make the hard and possibly initially unpopular decisions. If you do so I am confident that within months the people will appreciate what will come to be seen as you demonstrating strength, leadership and care.

Yours Faithfully



Senator Malcolm Roberts
Senator for Queensland

c.c. Hon. Greg Hunt
Minister for Health

Senator Anne Ruston
Minister for Families & Social Services

Hon. Peter Dutton
Minister for Home Affairs

Senator Pauline Hanson