

To: jsct@aph.gov.au

## **Request for clarification on the JSCOT consideration of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Amendments to the International Health Regulations**

As a concerned Australian, I am writing to respectfully request your attention and consideration regarding an issue of paramount importance—the recent and proposed changes to the International Health Regulations.

The changes will impact Australia's ability to respond to any future international health crises and both threaten to change the nature of the relationship between Australia and the WHO as well as undermine Australia's health and parliamentary authority.

As per the WHO's own website, "The IHR are an instrument of international law that is legally-binding on 196 countries, including the 194 WHO Member States". The proposed amendments include that:

- the words non-binding be deleted (article 1) and
- their decision will be final over Australia (article 43)

It is also proposed that Australia introduce domestic legislation to implement the WHO's mandates (article 4).

The deadline for input into a further 300+ proposed changes to International Health Regulations that are currently under negotiation was the 27th January. Whether this deadline was met and the negotiations have been shrouded in secrecy, being held to a large extent in secret and without public input.

The inability of the WHO to demonstrate publicly that it has complied with Article 55 of its own regulations begs the question of their integrity.

I am sure you would be aware that given these are only amendments to an existing agreement they hence do not require any approval by our Government.

As JSCOT approved the initial amendments (adopted in May 2022) prior to the December 2023 deadline the shortened time frames apply to Australia.

**I write to ask for an answer to the following question:**

- **Given that JSCOT took over 14 months of an 18 month period to assess and approve the small number of initial amendments around time frames (Article 59 IHRAs), what is the timeline proposed by JSCOT to complete the review and recommendations on the over 300 Amendments to the International Health Regulations within the 10 month period allowed, assuming they are passed at the World Health Assembly in May 2024?**

This process must include:

- Consideration of over 300 Amendments to the IHR and their impact, possible benefits or detriments to Australia;

- Consideration of the impact on Australian domestic laws and our Constitution and the legislation required, also within strict time frames, to implement the IHR Amendments, if approved;
- Consideration of the impacts on Australian Human Rights laws and legislation especially in relation to empowering the WHO to direct Australia to enforce treatment, detention, surveillance and sharing of personal health data;
- Consideration of the costs – specified and unspecified – and obligations to support equitable distribution and purchasing of pandemic products;
- Consultation with the public and reporting on such consultation.

I kindly request that the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Treaties responds to the question above with a timely and constructive answer that will demonstrate a commitment to democratic values and explain how the Committee plans to ensure complete and proper process is observed.

Yours faithfully,

[Your Name]

[Suburb, Postcode]