

The 20 Critical Questions Series

What Australians should ask their Government about Pandemics

Updated 2022

Pandemic Preparation

1. Has Government formally assessed risk of pandemic disease disasters and made the information available to the community?
2. Has business impact been formally assessed should a pandemic disaster occur, and does this include such things as (a) formal economic impact analysis and potential impacts (b) supplier and supply chain risk (c) reserve supplies available as 'war stocks' (d) law and order (e) disadvantage and social welfare?
3. Does Government have a formal pandemic plan independent of all other emergency response plans, coupled with a specified pandemic management team practiced in its role?
4. Are there defined trigger points that will escalate a pandemic event and are they clearly disseminated beforehand to the community to understand?
5. Is there a formal documented stepped escalation process to manage a pandemic event that gets progressively worse or takes a long time to overcome? Are defined trigger points and the escalation process made available to the community to understand for example through a simple diagram on a Government website?
6. Is there a co-ordinated and practiced approach to pandemic threat across the nation that includes pandemic related guidance for the community and organisations to guide their preparedness?
7. Does Government have a formal schedule of pandemic scenario testing that is regularly carried out?
8. Are post-test pandemic scenario test reports written, disseminated and reports provided to the community to assist their preparedness?
9. Are recommended improvement actions from pandemic tests recorded, remediated by Government in a timely way, and actively followed-up to ensure the actions get properly implemented?

When a Pandemic Occurs

10. Does Government get on the front foot with a considered and coherent strategy, plan, escalation trigger points and communication approach?
11. Is Government response based around a sound and balanced strategy leveraged from pre-pandemic planning, rather than building a response plan as you go? Does it include scenario analysis at three levels – (a) optimistic 'best case scenario' (b) expected 'likely scenario' (c) pessimistic 'worst case scenario'?
12. Is Government communication and messaging to the community clear, co-ordinated and consistent so the community can understand measures to be implemented and the reasons for them? Does this include timely release of modelling data to the community?
13. Does Government response planning seek to get community trust and buy-in?

When a Pandemic Ends

14. Are independent and objective post-pandemic reports written and openly disseminated throughout the community?
15. Are pandemic preparedness improvement actions recorded and implemented in a timely way to assure better future preparedness, and is this reported to decision-makers and the community?

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16. Are operations and activities of regulators and other scrutineers re-established in a fashion that supports present and future business recovery efforts?
17. Are high-level sovereign risks assessed including over-reliance on suppliers for food, medicines, manufactured goods, contact centres, etc within discrete global regions?
18. Does Government provide meaningful advice to business owners of how the world has, or has not, changed so they can orient their organisation accordingly, recognising this will usually be broader than 'restoring normal operations'?

Assurance

19. Does Government regularly review and audit pandemic preparedness?
20. Are reports from reviews and audits publicly available to the community?

The Big Question

How does Government clearly know it has effective pandemic preparedness and whether measures are likely to be successful if a need arises?