



**Andrew Barr MLA**  
Chief Minister  
Treasurer  
Minister for Climate Action  
Minister for Economic Development  
Minister for Tourism  
  
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Authorised for publication

27.1.21 *AB*

Ms Nicole Lawder MLA  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality  
ACT Legislative Assembly  
GPO Box 1020  
CANBERRA ACT 2601



Dear Ms Lawder <sup>Nicole</sup>

Thank you for your letter of 10 December 2020 in relation to the COVID-19 Emergency Response Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 (No 3).

I note the Committee's focus on proposed amendments to reporting frequency under the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020 (Reports for Legislative Assembly) and its request for further information on the rationale for the shift proposed from monthly to quarterly reporting.

Essentially, the proposed shift is intended to reduce the costs associated with monthly reporting, while preserving a good level of transparency for the Legislative Assembly.

Monthly reporting on the use of emergency response legislative measures was very apt last year – when the measures were new and the way in which they might be used was less clear. However, the measures and their use are now more mature.

Recent monthly reporting indicates that as at 30 November 2020, 12 measures had not been used at all and that for the 1-30 November 2020 reporting period:

- only 24 of the 55 reported measures were used; and
- details of the use of seven measures could not be provided due to unavailability of data.

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Quarterly reporting would enable the Legislative Assembly to monitor the use of measures and to identify trends over a longer reporting periods. It would also align with the length of time a public health emergency declaration may be extended by the Minister for Health under the *Public Health Act 1997*.


I also note that transparency is supported not only by Reports for the Legislative Assembly but also by mechanisms such as the notification of relevant instruments on the ACT Legislation Register and Committee hearings.

If the change in the Bill is adopted, the Legislative Assembly will have had the benefit of ten monthly reports on the application of each of the emergency response measures and will have the benefit of quarterly reporting going forward.

As we work towards recovery from the pandemic, including through the roll-out of the national COVID-19 immunisation program, it is important that we focus the use public resources where those resources will have most benefit for the community.

I thank the Committee for its consideration of the referred Bill, and I look forward to considering the Committee's report on the Bill.

Yours sincerely

  
Andrew Barr MLA  
Chief Minister

15 January 2021