



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

STANDING COMMITTEE ON LAW AND JUSTICE

MEDIA RELEASE

INQUIRY INTO THE MANDATORY DISEASE TESTING BILL 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

24 November 2020

The Standing Committee on Law and Justice in the NSW Legislative Council has established an inquiry into the Mandatory Disease Testing Bill 2020.

The Bill proposes to establish a scheme under which a person can be ordered to provide a blood sample for testing if, as a result of deliberate action, the person's blood has come into contact with a health, emergency and public sector worker, and the worker is at risk of contracting blood-borne disease as a result. It would allow law enforcement officers to use 'reasonable force' to assist in taking blood and preventing loss or contamination of a blood sample. It would also impose a maximum penalty of 100 penalty units or imprisonment for 12 months, or both, for failing to comply with a mandatory testing order.

The Committee Chair, The Hon Wes Fang MLC, said: 'This bill aims to assist frontline workers such as police, health and emergency services workers who, in the course of their duties, encounter confronting situations that can expose them to the bodily fluids of others. The risk of contracting blood-borne diseases in these situations can cause significant stress and anxiety for those workers and their families. Currently there is no mechanism in New South Wales that requires or compels a person whose bodily fluids were involved in an exposure incident to be tested for infectious diseases, and that is the gap this Bill aims to address. The committee plans to look at how the proposed mandatory testing scheme will operate and whether the Bill provides certain safeguards, particularly for vulnerable people and minors'.

The committee invites interested organisations and community members to make a written submission to the inquiry. Submissions are due by **Monday 21 December 2020**, and can be lodged via the committee's website: www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lawandjustice. Please note that pro forma letters will not be accepted as submissions.

For information about the inquiry, including committee membership and the terms of reference, please visit the committee's website www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lawandjustice.

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For further information please contact Committee Chair, the Hon Wes Fang MLC, on 9230 2888