



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **COVID-19: Parliamentary inquiry to hold hearings on 10 and 11 August**

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**4 August 2021**

The NSW parliamentary inquiry exploring the circumstances of the recent COVID-19 outbreak and its management by the state government has announced that it will be holding two public hearings on Tuesday 10 August and Wednesday 11 August.

Witnesses for the 10 August hearing include the Minister for Health and Medical Research the Hon Brad Hazzard MP, Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant PSM and a panel of epidemiologists and experts.

Witnesses for the 11 August hearing include the Minister for Education the Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC together with teachers' unions and representatives from the non-government education sector.

Chair of the committee, Mr David Shoebridge MLC, stated, "The committee is pleased that the Health Minister and Dr Chant have accepted our invitation to appear to answer questions about the health advice that lead to the imposition and timing of the current lockdown."

He continued, "With some of the strictest lockdown measures and restriction in place since the beginning of the pandemic last year and Parliament having been suspended, it is essential that this oversight committee do its job and closely scrutinise the government's actions."

The committee has invited the Education Minister and senior bureaucrats in the Department of Education in response to the Premier's recent announcement that Year 12 students will return to face-to-face learning on Monday 16 August, and that a vaccination program will be carried out for Year 12 students in the eight most affected Local Government Areas. The committee will also hear from other key representatives in the education community.

Mr Shoebridge said, "The committee is looking forward to the Minister and senior departmental staff answering the questions that so many parents, students and teachers have about the plan to bring back HSC students. We are conscious of the 16 August deadline as well as the evolving situation in Queensland schools, and will be seeking clear answers to the health and safety issues that inevitably arise from this proposed mass return of senior students during a COVID-19 outbreak."

Both hearings will be held virtually, in the interests of the safety of witnesses, committee members and staff. It is intended that the hearings will be broadcast live, or alternatively uploaded for public viewing as soon as they conclude.

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*For further information please contact Committee Chair, Mr David Shoebridge, on 0408 113 952*