

3 April 2020



Michael Byrne QC
President

Parole Board Queensland

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Attn: Kym Charlton, Director
Media and Communications, Strategy and Governance
Queensland Corrective Services

By Email: gcsmedia@corrections.qld.gov.au

Dear Ms Charlton

Re: Parole Board Queensland COVID-19 general media release

I write to provide a press statement to be generally released in response to any queries regarding the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Parole Board Queensland (the Board) and its functions.

This statement is as follows:

The Parole Board Queensland (the Board) is a vital part of the criminal justice system.

As an independent statutory authority, the Board operates to ensure lawful, objective, evidence-based parole decisions are made in accordance with the legislation and Ministerial Guidelines, with community safety always being the highest priority.

The Board has put in place processes to prioritise the consideration of parole applications by people identified to have a vulnerability to COVID-19.

Based on Queensland Health advice, the following prisoners may fall into the category of people vulnerable to COVID-19:

- *Those who are aged 60 or over;*
- *who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander;*
- *who have a chronic medical condition;*
- *who have asthma or a respiratory condition;*
- *who have a weakened or compromised immune system.*

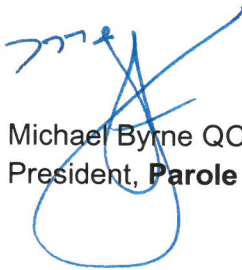
The Ministerial Guidelines require that the Board is to seek advice from Queensland Health or other approved medical specialist on the seriousness, and management of, the prisoner's medical condition.

To be clear, vulnerability, exposure to, or a confirmed diagnosis of Covid-19 is not sufficient to be granted a parole order. It is just one of the many factors the Board takes into account. The highest priority for the Board is always the safety of the community.

The Board will not comment on individual parole decisions.

Should you have any concerns regarding queries made by members of the press about the Board or its functions please do not hesitate to contact Michelle Moore, Director, Parole Board Queensland Secretariat contactable via Michelle.Moore@dcs.qld.gov.au or on (07) 3565 7563.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Byrne QC
President, **Parole Board Queensland**

