BAC-BR-18471

Professor Euan M Wallace AM  
Secretary    
Department of Health

50 Lonsdale Street   
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Secretary

**STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS FOR DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH’S COMMUNICABLE DISEASE SECTION**

I am pleased to provide you with my expectations for the Department of Health’s (the department) Communicable Disease section to guide the regulator’s business planning processes.

In my portfolio as Minister for Health, I administer a range of Acts and regulations designed to promote wellbeing and to protect the health of the Victorian community.

I am committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all Victorians including protecting the Victorian community from the risks and harms associated with communicable diseases.

As Minister for Health, I am responsible for administering the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (the Act) and this guidance should be read in the context of the objectives, obligations and functions outlined in this Act. This guidance should also be read in the context of any other legislative and non-legislative obligations on the Communicable Disease section.

Based on consultation with the department about the government’s priorities and emerging risks, my expectations for the Communicable Disease section are as follows.

* Continue to implement, sustain, and continuously improve the Electronic Laboratory Reporting initiative to simplify the requirement for laboratories to provide notifications of communicable diseases in a timely and accurate manner.
* Routinely collect data and information from laboratories on selected conditions (COVID-19 (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2), **Respiratory Syncytial Virus,** influenza, and chlamydia) to better enhance surveillance and inform more targeted public health responses.
* Continue to support pathology services and laboratories regarding their obligations to notify conditions.
* Provide accurate, evidence-based advice and capacity building to local government on the discharge of their responsibilities under the *Public Health Wellbeing Act 2008* related to infectious disease control, registered premises, and prescribed accommodation.
* Support the regulatory transition related to the sex work decriminalisation reforms as they pertain to the management of infectious diseases.

In addition, I expect all regulators in the health portfolio to commit to and action:

* Contributing to health, wellbeing, and safety outcomes for Aboriginal people and the advancement of Aboriginal self-determination.
* Climate change adaptation and enhancing health system resilience through the improvement of environmental sustainability.

I request the department’s Communicable Disease section to incorporate these expectations into their business plans and include milestones for when the section will meet these expectations, and report on progress. The business plans should also include appropriate milestones to review the content of this letter and to advise me when it needs to be updated or renewed. At any time, I may request that you report on meeting my expectations or issue a new statement of expectations letter.

I further request the department’s Communicable Disease section to undertake a light touch review of the expectations in this letter as part of their annual reporting obligations and to advise me if there are any refinements they would recommend.

I look forward to the Communicable Disease section working continuously towards achieving best practice in the administration and enforcement of regulation.

Yours sincerely

**The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP**

1 / 7 / 2023