



Australian Government

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

ACTING SECRETARY

Ref: EC22-000002

Senator Katy Gallagher
Chair
The Senate select Committee on COVID-19
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Gallagher

Thank you for the correspondence on Friday 7 January 2022 requesting the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to appear before the Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 (the Committee) on 14 January 2022.

It is respectfully requested that the hearing be deferred to a later date. The Department is playing an important role in coordinating the response to the Omicron variant. Although accountability to the Senate about the Australian Government's COVID-19 response is also critical, appearing at a hearing this Friday would divert attention and resources of senior staff in the Department that are crucial to advising and informing the management of the Omicron outbreak.

We would welcome your agreement to a postponement of the hearing so we can balance the need to respond to the outbreak as well as remain accountable for this response. We understand Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck, Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care Services, has made a similar representation in relation to the Department of Health's appearance before the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Foster
10 January 2022