

**To:** [Committee, Health \(REPS\)](#)  
**Subject:** 372 - Mark Newnham  
**Date:** Friday, 18 November 2022 5:50:07 PM

---

**Name:** Mark Newnham

**What is your experience of being a patient in Australia of long COVID and/or repeated COVID infections, particularly regarding diagnosis and treatment?:** My experience with being the spouse of a long COVID patient has been frustrating at best. We have seen GP's who seem to be only one step ahead of us and lack any background, training and support. They are generally unable to help and have been less and less empathetic to our plight with each visit to the extent where we have moved on. We have been referred to a specialist who undertake test after test and advise us that everything is normal despite obviously being to the contrary. We are then referred to the next specialist hoping for answers while having limited financial ability to do so. The sheer effort to leave the house for those appointments exhausts my wife for days. We have heard of a holy grail some people have also referred to as a long-COVID clinic but are yet to receive any confirmation that they actually exist. We are now at a point where my Wifes mental state has deteriorated to a point that has warranted assessment, action and medication via an agency mental health assessment team. I am growing progressively despondent.

**What have the health, social, educational and economic impacts been for you, in relation to long COVID or repeated infection? Has there been an impact on your family or community?:** My Wifes inability to participate in life means she misses out on the educational, sporting and extra-curricula achievements of her children, instead she is confined to bed of loneliness and despair, physically and mentally unable to be a mother. Her mental health is shot! From my perspective, we are a family of 5 and pre-COVID, relied on both parents logistically and financially. I am now wearing household responsibilities solely which is a both a physical and emotional strain while also caring for my wife. I recently commence long term sick leave as I cannot work full time due to the physical demand and most evenings am exhausted. I have also sought help for my own mental health and am on medication to help. Financially we are screwed. Prior to long COVID, we were reliant on two wages to live. My wife has not worked for well over 6 months due long COVID and pericarditis from her third vaccination booster. Our savings are gone, we have unpaid bills and are borrowing funds where we can from relatives to survive. We are in the process of disposing of investments for our family's future to get by and repay debts. We are not eligible for any government support. We also find that many people simply do not understand long COVID. This was reflected recently by Waleed Aly on The Project who announced to the nation that long COVID sufferers shouldn't be worried about the 4th COVID wave because they already have it. We have many friends who have simply disappeared, we believe because of this misunderstanding.

**What specific actions would you like to be taken in relation to Long Covid and Repeated infection, that would positively impact the situations you have outlined above? :** Simply, financial support. GP's, specialists, councillors and tests all cost money and with a compromised family income, there comes a point where we give up on seeking help or are financially are unable to do so.... Sorry, as much as I would love to continue, i

have already spent too much time on this submission and have family commitments I need to attend to. I also do not have time to proof read so I apologise for any gramatical or spelling errors.

**I would like the Inquiry to contact me to discuss privacy and confidentiality options for my submission:** No