



WESTERN AUSTRALIA POLICE FORCE

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Ms Rebecca Brown
A/g Director General
Department of Premier and Cabinet

Dear Ms ~~Brown~~

Rebecca

**INTERIM ADVICE FROM PROFESSOR TARUN WEERAMANTHRI ON
HOTEL QUARANTINE REVIEW**

In response to Professor Weeramanthri's Interim Advice for his Review of Western Australia's Hotel Quarantine (HQ) Arrangements, I advise as follows.

Professor Weeramanthri outlines the scope of his review and notes that it is complementary to parallel WA Police investigation into Case #903 (#903). I will provide a separate report in relation to the findings of the police investigation for this matter.

Within the interim advice, the adequacy of existing Hotel Quarantine arrangements are noted by Professor Weeramanthri that over 37,000 people have been through the HQ system since March 2000 with over 500 positive cases being well managed. It is instructive that the current reviews are as a consequence of a single infection of an HQ Security Guard and that extensive contact tracing and testing is yet to produce any positive community spread. It is pleasing to also note Professor Weeramanthri's acknowledgement of the rapidly implemented administrative processes put in place by the WA Police Force to monitor officers' compliance with new requirements.

The interim report acknowledges that since the #903 transmission, as the SEC, based on the Chief Health Officer's advice, I have directed through an EMA Direction that HQ workers (and additionally International Airport Workers) be subject to daily on shift salivary testing for COVID-19. Further, PCR testing through nasal swabs is also required and subject of current implementation. The interim report provides a substantial level of detail around Infection Control and Prevention practices benchmarked against world's best practice and current research. I do not propose to comment on the adequacy of those aspects as I believe that rightly sits with DoH to provide a response.

In his analysis of the risks caused by new strains of COVID-19, Professor Weeramanthri discusses community consequence of transmission from HQ and the heightened risk of

airborne transmission as opposed to droplet transmission which was previously the primary focus as to the adequacy of the current arrangements. In this regard, as the SEC I am keen to give effect to any EMA Direction changes which might assist with a change in position by DoH including but not limited to additional testing requirements or prohibition on secondary employment for high risk HQ workers as determined by health advice. I am actively progressing amended EMA Directions in conjunction with public health advice. I anticipate that these enhanced directions concerning additional testing of HQ workers and the prohibition on secondary employment for certain persons will be progressed this week.

During the presentation there was significant discussion regarding the requirement to systematically assess ventilation systems in HQ sites noting the commentary around transmissibility of new strains. I concur with Professor Weeramanthri's recommendation that this needs to be examined as a matter of priority by suitably qualified professionals.

For completeness, please see my responses to each of the interim recommendations below.

Recommendations for Improvement to Further Reduce Public Health Risk in Quarantine Hotels

Ventilation recommendations

1. *WA Government to instigate an immediate independent expert review of airflow and ventilation in all WA quarantine hotels, to inform any risk mitigation strategy for airborne transmission from infected guests to quarantine workers, and determine appropriate ventilation standards. This review could be conducted by a consulting engineer (mechanical building services) in conjunction with an occupational hygienist.*

WA Police Comment: This recommendation is being actioned by DoH with full support of the SEC.

2. *In the meantime, SHICC to require all quarantine centre workers to wear face masks at all times while indoors, and strongly consider a higher level of respiratory protection (e.g. P2/N95 masks and/or eye protection) for all workers at sites where ventilation may be problematic or not adequately assessed.*

WA Police Comment: This recommendation is being actioned by DoH with full support of the SEC.

3. *Consider ventilation adequacy when requisitioning quarantine hotels.*

WA Police Comment: This recommendation is being actioned by DoH with full support of the SEC.

Other non-ventilation recommendations

4. *Introduction of daily shift salivary PCR testing, in addition to weekly nasopharyngeal swab PCR. This has already been introduced in WA and is welcome as it potentially provides a means for early diagnosis of COVID-19. SHICC should now monitor compliance with such testing, to provide system assurance that all HQ staff (whether hotel employees, government employees or contractors) are being tested.*

WA Police Comment: This recommendation is being actioned by DoH with full support of the SEC. SEC has concurrently instructed SSO to draft EMA Directions in support of the amended HQ contracts.

5. *Quarantine centre workers to not work at other sites, and not to be financially disadvantaged by such a restriction. This is consistent with recommendation 22 of the Victorian COVID-19 Hotel Quarantine Inquiry that stated 'every effort must be made to ensure that all personnel working at the facility are not working across multiple quarantine sites and not working in other forms of employment.' We are informed that this is being actively progressed by the WA Government.*

WA Police Comment: This recommendation is being actioned by DoH with full support of the SEC. SEC has concurrently instructed SSO to draft EMA Directions in support of the amended HQ contracts. Of note, should police officers be tasked to HQ duties of a stratified higher risk, the SEC requires police to be subject of testing under existing Directions.

6. *SEC to strengthen the Direction, and SHICC to strengthen protocols for testing and medical care of quarantine workers who develop any symptoms or fall ill.*

WA Police Comment: Directions for testing of HQ workers who develop any symptoms or fall ill can be progressed quickly by the SEC (or authorised delegates) on receipt of health advice as to what symptoms and protocols need to be considered. SEC has further instructed that the Directions mandate HQ workers must be PCR tested on development of symptoms or illness.

7. SHICC to:

- *monitor and provide system assurance that all HQ staff undergo regular face to face IPC training.*
- *introduce periodic external IPC safety audits (as recommended by the Victorian COVID-19 Hotel Quarantine Inquiry) to complement the current weekly internal safety audits at each site.*

WA Police Comment: This recommendation is being actioned by DoH with full support of the SEC.

The Police Investigation Report into Case #903 that will outline a number of considerations relevant to contact tracing, legislative matters and HQ considerations including:

- Installation of CCTV on all floors of HQ facilities
- Changing the seating position of security guards on HQ floors relevant to confirmed COVID-19 positive cases and airflow direction

The WA Police interim investigation report has been provided to Professor Weeramanthri for his consideration and the final Police report will be provided shortly.

I welcome Professor Weeramanthri's interim advice and will continue to work with DoH to implement changes in Directions to assist with improvements to.

Yours sincerely



CHRIS DAWSON
COMMISSIONER OF POLICE
STATE EMERGENCY COORDINATOR

8 February 2020