



Our Ref: LOG21/263

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

Dear Ms Brown

REVIEW OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S HOTEL QUARANTINE ARRANGEMENTS

Further to my previous correspondence of 8 February 2021, please find enclosed an update on the Department of Health's (the Department) response to the recommendations from Professor Weeramanthri's *Review of Western Australia's Quarantine Arrangements*. Amendments are listed in blue text for your ease of reference.

The Department remains committed to ensuring a robust, safe and effective hotel quarantine program to protect the health of the Western Australian community.

Yours sincerely

Dr D J Russell-Weisz
DIRECTOR GENERAL

22 February 2021

Att: *Department of Health – Update*

Ventilation recommendations	
<p>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.</p>	<p>Supported.</p> <p>The Department of Health has already engaged a team from its Environmental Health Directorate (EHD), along with an independent occupational hygienist, to scope and undertake a review of airflow and ventilation in all WA quarantine hotels. This will also include a mechanical engineer.</p> <p>As a start, EHD staff and an occupational hygienist examined the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel on 5 February, and a report from this visit is due to the Department during the week beginning 8 February 2021.</p> <p>The outcome of this initial assessment will help inform any broader work regarding airflow and ventilation. It is planned to commence the broader review into the 9 SHICC hotels later this week or early next.</p> <p>The Department's EHD has overseen a preliminary investigation of air handling and ventilation at the Four Points by Sheraton using a consultant occupational hygienist and a HVAC engineer experienced in air handling in healthcare facilities.</p> <p>Several factors likely to have collectively produced an exposure pathway for Patient 903 (infected security guard) were identified. A report of the investigation along with recommendations to minimise potential further risks at Four Points was completed and submitted to the Chief Health Officer for consideration on 17 February 2021. Recommendations included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specific advice about avoidance of certain rooms • changes to shift arrangements and station placements for security guard • wearing of upgraded PPE <p>The report confirmed that the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel could continue to operate as a quarantine hotel provided these issues are addressed.</p> <p>A requirement for wearing of surgical mask and eye protection had already been implemented prior to completion of the preliminary investigation. While the Chief Health Officer supports the current use of N95/P2 masks for aerosol generating procedures, the broader use of N95/P2 masks by other staff is not supported. Current PPE, including surgical masks and eye protection, should continue.</p> <p>The Chief Health Officer has endorsed the recommendations and requested that SHICC oversee implementation of these steps prior to re-opening of Four points for hotel quarantine purposes.</p> <p>Outcomes of the initial Four Points assessment were used to inform development of the scope for a broader review of airflow and ventilation in all other WA quarantine hotels.</p> <p>Site visits to Four Points (two further visits), the Pan Pacific and Novotel Langley were completed last week. It is anticipated that the remaining 6 hotels will be inspected this week, together with reviews of floor plans, engineering plans, plant room and operating records and hotel staff and quarantine guest arrangements.</p> <p>An interim report covering immediate or high priority management recommendations identified during the site visits will be prepared (if warranted) late this week (wk commencing 22 February) or early next week, with the full report anticipated approximately a week after that.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Supported.</p> <p>All Hotel Quarantine Workers (HQWs) must wear masks and eyewear in high risk areas (this means anyplace where guests are accommodated or when guests enter/exit hotels).</p> <p>In addition, all guests must now wear masks when opening their door for any reason, such as collecting meals and putting out laundry. Directions for guests on how to do this safely have been written and will be provided to all arriving guests.</p> <p>The Department would support a nationally consistent approach to PPE requirements for hotel quarantine staff. The Chief Health Officer has raised this matter with AHPPC and continues to actively follow up.</p>
<p>3 Consider ventilation adequacy when requisitioning quarantine hotels.</p>	<p>Supported. See response to Recommendation 1.</p>

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.	Supported Daily shift salivary PCR testing has now been introduced. This is in addition to weekly nasopharyngeal testing. Plans to strengthen compliance monitoring are underway.
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.	Supported. Contract variation letters, mandating that hotel security officers must not engage in secondary employment, have been sent to the four Security Companies that provide security officers across the 9 quarantine hotels. Similar contracts have been provided to the 9 SHICC hotels for other HQWs. The Department expects to receive all signed contracts during the week of 8 February 2021, with all becoming effective no later than 15 February 2021. All contracts are now in effect. Employers must now obtain statutory declarations from each employee within the first 7 days of the contract to confirm that they will work exclusively for their employer, exclusively at a single quarantine hotel, and will not undertake any paid employment, engagement or work other than providing services at the specified quarantine hotel. Following this, the workers will be asked to sign declarations to this effect to cover each pay cycle. With each invoice issued, the contractor will provide the State with a signed statutory declaration that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ they have received the statutory declarations (after the first invoice, declarations) from all the workers; ○ the amounts claimed are a true and accurate representation of the hours worked by workers in the relevant period; ○ the amounts claimed for liabilities or costs are a true and accurate representation of those incurred; and ○ the additional allowance was paid to the workers in full, without deduction or set off of any kind other than any amount required by law to be withheld. The SHICC will continue to monitor compliance with the contracts, including governance of ongoing arrangements.
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.	Supported.
7	SHICC to: A) monitor and provide system assurance that all HQ staff undergo regular face to face IPC training. B) 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.	Supported All HQW in high risk areas undergo face to face Infection Prevention Control (IPC) training and are audited by IPC experts weekly. The introduction of periodic external IPC safety audits is supported.