

IN THE MATTER OF
THE BOARD OF INQUIRY INTO
THE HOTEL QUARANTINE PROGRAM

STATEMENT OF KATRINA MARIE CURRIE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES, DEPARTMENT OF
JOBS, PRECINCTS & REGIONS

I, **KATRINA MARIE CURRIE**, Executive Director, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (**DJPR**), say as follows in response to the Notice to Produce a Witness Statement issued by the Board of Inquiry and dated 12 August 2020 (**NTP**):

1. I set out below my responses addressing the questions asked of me in the NTP.
2. In providing this statement, I have sought to the best of my ability to answer the questions that the Board of Inquiry has asked of me. In many instances, in order to provide detailed responses, I have informed myself of matters by reviewing documents made available to me, all of which I understand have been produced to the Board of Inquiry.

BACKGROUND, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

NTP Question 1: What is your title and role within the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions?

3. I am currently on secondment to Working for Victoria as the Executive Director, Employment Delivery. My substantive position is Executive Director, Employment, Inclusion Group at Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (**DJPR**). I have held my substantive position since August 2018. In my substantive role, I report to David Clements, Deputy Secretary.
4. I am responsible for, among other things, leading the Employment Branch of the Inclusion Group.

NTP Question 2: What is your relevant professional background and work history?

5. Prior to my role as Executive Director of Employment, DJPR, I held the following positions:
 - (a) General Manager, Work and Learning, Brotherhood of St Laurence;

- (b) Manager, Strategic Planning Mental Health, Drugs and Regions Division, Department of Health and Human Services (**DHHS**);
 - (c) Manager, Data Quality and Reporting, Victorian Bushfire Case Management Service, DHHS;
 - (d) Senior Policy Advisor (Secondment), Workforce Victoria Division, Workforce Participation Policy Branch, Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development;
 - (e) Manager, Strategic Planning, Mental Health and Drugs Division, DHHS;
 - (f) Manager, Economic Development & Strategic Partnerships, London Borough of Southwark;
 - (g) Manager, Adult Learning and Commissioning, Regeneration Department, London Borough of Southwark; and
 - (h) Regional Manager, Aged Care, Victoria, Commonwealth Department of Health.
6. I hold the following degrees/qualifications:
- (a) Executive Masters in Public Administration; and
 - (b) Honours in Bachelor of Arts.

NTP Question 3: Prior to your involvement in the hotel quarantine program, what experience had you had in –

- (a) contracting arrangements generally;**
- (b) contracting on behalf of the Victorian government;**
- (c) contracting for the provision of security services?**

7. I have worked in commonwealth, state and local governments in both Australia and the United Kingdom.
8. In my current role, I am responsible for overseeing the contracting of services and the management of contracts (including review and evaluation) for employment programs and related work, such as research, evaluation and audit programs. Many of my past roles have also required me to undertake or manage contracts on behalf of government.
9. Prior to my involvement in the hotel quarantine program, I did not have experience contracting for the provision of security services.

NTP Question 4: Did you have any personal or professional connection with any representative of the security companies who were engaged to provide security services to the hotel quarantine program? If so, what was that connection?

10. In or around 2014 or 2015, I attended a graduation ceremony where I met the Chief Executive Officer of Unified Security Pty Ltd (**Unified**), David Millward. At that point in time, I was employed by the Brotherhood of St Laurence. It is common for me to meet many executives and employers given the nature of my work and the field within which I operate. I did not have any further contact with Mr Millward between meeting him at the graduation ceremony and my discussions with Unified in late March 2020. The fact that I had previously met Mr Millward did not inform, and had no bearing upon, my decision to approach Unified and I did not recall that I had previously met Mr Millward until several days after I had first contacted Unified. I set out the basis upon which I approached Unified in my response to NTP Question 9 below. From my recollection, I did not, and do not, have any other personal or professional connection with any other representative of the security companies who were engaged to provide security services to the hotel quarantine program.

INITIAL INVOLVEMENT UP TO AND INCLUDING 29 MARCH 2020

NTP Question 5: When did you first become aware that a hotel quarantine program was to be established in Victoria?

11. I first became aware that a hotel quarantine program was to be established in Victoria when I received an email from Alex Kamenev, Deputy Secretary – Delivery and Recovery (COVID-19) at 12:17 pm on 27 March 2020, which stated:¹

Hi there

Unni is going to write to us shortly with potential requirements for a cleaning and security workforce to manage people who might be quarantined in hotel rooms.

We might need to act quickly depending on govt policy choices in this space so would be good to think through options. It would be in metro and regions

I need a point person who can work with Unni

Cheers

Alex

¹ DJP.104.008.6765.

NTP Question 6: Why and when were you given responsibility for organising private security companies for that hotel quarantine program?

12. At the time that it was determined that a hotel quarantine program would be established in Victoria, I had been significantly involved in “Working for Victoria”, an initiative intended to assist jobseekers to find work and employers to find workers if they have been impacted by COVID-19. As part of my involvement, I was required to liaise with a range of businesses across a wide range of sectors. I understand that I was initially given responsibility for identifying and engaging private security companies for the hotel quarantine program because it was considered that I would be able to identify appropriate private security companies at short notice given my work on “Working for Victoria”.
13. I was approached by Mr Kamenev at 10.05 pm on 27 March 2020, for my suggestions for private security companies.² Following my discussion with Mr Kamenev, he sent an email to Unni Menon, Executive Director, Aviation Strategy and Services and a member of his team at 10.17 pm identifying me as a person able to assist in sourcing private security companies.³ At 10.40 pm, Cameron Nolan, Executive Director – Priority Projects Unit, responded to Mr Kamenev’s email of 10.17 pm instructing me to start working out how DJPR could ensure a supply of private security companies while Mr Nolan and Rob Holland, Executive Director – DJPR COVID-19 Coordination, worked out the chain of command with the DHHS.⁴

NTP Question 7: What instructions were you given regarding:

- (a) which security companies should be approached;**
(b) the nature of the work that security services would be providing;
(c) the necessary training and qualifications required for the work;
(d) the time frame within which security guards would be required;
(e) the basis on which security services would be engaged; and
(f) your authority to enter into verbal agreements for the provision of security services?

14. At the time that I was identifying appropriate private security companies, I had not received any instructions as to the matters in sub-paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (e) above. I had been informed by Mr Kamenev that I was required to identify and engage private security firms by the evening on 28 March 2020.⁵ I understood that the intended model for the procurement

² DJP.105.003.6258.

³ DJP.101.002.1076.

⁴ DJP.101.002.1076.

⁵ DJP.108.005.5135.

of private security, and the function to be fulfilled by private security guards, was developing. This was conveyed to me in Mr Nolan's email of 10.40 pm on 27 March where he set out his thinking as to the "ideal" operating model for the program:⁶

Ideal model in my mind would be a supply of security staff from Katrina/David/Alex who work under the direction of an authorised officer in DHHS. This DHHS team would induct the security guards and provide on-call advice about what to do in certain situations and determine if any ...

15. Upon contacting Unified and Wilson, I sent an email at 11.50 pm on 27 March to Mr Kamenev, Mr Clements and Lisa Buckingham, General Manager – Working for Victoria, informing them of this fact and seeking further information concerning the proposed role and responsibilities of private security firms. My email included the following questions:⁷

What are we wanting from Security personnel? Are we expecting them to escort to the hotel and/or provide site security? What shifts are envisaged? Is Crown okay with external security personnel?

16. On the morning of 28 March 2020, at 7.04 am I sent an email to Mr Clements, Ms Buckingham, Mr Kamenev, Mr Nolan and Mr Holland, informing them that the CEO of Unified Security had sent me a text message, and that I would call him shortly.⁸ At 7.53 am Mr Clements replied to my email, stating "Judy [sic] how many people he could stand up today."⁹ Following this, I attended a meeting with Mr Clements, Mr Kamenev and Simon Phemister, DJPR Secretary.¹⁰ At that meeting, the matters that had been raised in my email set out at paragraph 15 above were discussed. Further, I understood from this meeting that the intention was that private security guards would be engaged to assist in ensuring compliance with the orders and directions issued by the Chief Health Officer.

17. In the morning on 28 March 2020, Mr Menon circulated an email which included a table setting out which hotels required the provision of private security and the likely number of rooms that would be made available to accommodate those required to quarantine at those hotels. Later on the same day, Mr Nolan sent to me a draft document entitled "Security in hotels — roles and responsibilities" which set out the proposed role and responsibilities of the private security guards.¹¹

18. The draft document sent to me by Mr Nolan set out the following as the comprising the role and responsibilities of private security guards:¹²

⁶ DJP.101.002.1076.
⁷ DJP.105.007.7884.
⁸ DJP.105.004.7476
⁹ DJP.105.004.7476
¹⁰ DJP.201.002.0002.
¹¹ DJP.105.004.0936.
¹² DJP.105.004.0936.

Support the Chief Health Officer, authorised officers and Victoria Police in the enforcement of the Isolation (International Arrivals) Directions (Attachment A) on the premises of the hotel.

Ensure quarantined guests do not leave the hotel for the period of their quarantine without the permission of an authorised officer.

Ensure that any disputes involving quarantined guests in the hotel are de-escalated without physical contact. If unable to de-escalate, Victoria Police should be contacted immediately.

Provide advice to quarantined guests on which areas they can go to in the hotel (Attachment B) and ensure that this is upheld.

19. The document also stated that private security guards could not use force in order to detain a guest that was being quarantined and that any disputes that could not be de-escalated verbally should be referred to management who would contact Victoria Police directly.¹³
20. I reviewed the document provided to me by Mr Nolan and considered that there were some additional points that needed noting. My reply email to Mr Nolan included the following feedback on the draft document:¹⁴

Probably two points worth adding:

They may need to prevent external parties trying to get into the hotel to meet family members or friends who have been quarantined

They will need to liaise with hotel security (where it exists) for advice on hotel layouts or access and exit points; emergency evacuation protocols; etc.

One thing we haven't thought of is what if a guest or visitor sets off a fire alarm deliberately or accidentally necessitating a hotel evacuation? Most hotel evacuation meeting points are usually a few hundred metres from a hotel. If they were planning to abscond, this would be a good way of achieving that end.

Mr Clements agreed with my proposed additions.¹⁵

21. I relied on the draft document provided to me by Mr Nolan in my discussions with Unified and Wilson as to the likely role and responsibilities of their private security personnel.
22. These matters comprised the information and instructions I received as to the matters identified in sub-paragraphs (a) to (e) of NTP Question 7.

¹³ DJP.105.004.0936.

¹⁴ DJP.105.004.0936.

¹⁵ DJP.105.004.0936.

23. As to my authority to enter verbal agreements, as set out above, I attended a meeting with Mr Phemister in the morning on 28 March 2020. I have since been shown notes of that meeting recorded by Personal Information, Director of the Office of the Secretary and I consider those notes to be an accurate reflection of the matters discussed in that meeting.¹⁶ At that meeting, I informed Mr Phemister that we had identified a licensed security provider that had staff who were trained, could supply PPE, and was ready to allocate 20 staff to the program immediately, and a further 100 staff over the next few days (Unified), along with another security provider that was also ready to stand up security (Wilson Security Pty Ltd).¹⁷ Mr Phemister stated that DJPR should proceed with procuring private security services from these firms.¹⁸ I recall that this was supplemented by a text message that I received from Mr Clements approving me to informally engage Unified and Wilson Security Pty Ltd (**Wilson**). It was on this basis that I informally engaged Unified and Wilson to provide private security services noting that, in the case of Wilson, the verbal authority that I provided it to proceed was limited to a single hotel.¹⁹ I made it clear to both Unified and Wilson that they would need to be formally engaged by entering into written agreements with DJPR. I understand that this is what occurred.
24. I did not engage MSS Security Pty Ltd (**MSS**) (whether informally or formally). Rather, I am informed by Paul Xerri, Principal Policy Officer – Inclusion, that MSS was informed that it would be engaged after the procurement teams of DJPR and Department of Treasury and Finance had advised Mr Xerri to use existing state purchase documentation in order to engage MSS.²⁰

NTP Question 8: Who gave you those instructions? How were they conveyed to you?

25. I have identified the source of my instructions and the method by which they were conveyed in my response to NTP Question 7.

NTP Question 9: How did you decide which security companies to approach? How did you come to approach a company that was not part of the “State Purchase Contract: Agreement for the Provision of Security Services “?

26. Following the approach from Mr Kamenev at 10.05 pm, I sent a text message to the Manager, Employer Engagement, who is a member of my team and asked him to liaise with members of the DJPR employer engagement team to identify and recommend appropriate

¹⁶ DJP.201.002.0002.

¹⁷ DJP.201.002.0002.

¹⁸ DJP.201.002.0002.

¹⁹ DJP.108.006.0912.

²⁰ DJP.110.001.3058.

private security companies for me to approach.²¹ I had originally proposed Wilson and SECUREcorp as potential providers of private security and wanted feedback from the employer engagement team. The employer engagement team usually sits within Jobs Victoria and works to identify employment opportunities for Jobs Victoria clients. The whole team has currently been seconded to Working for Victoria. As part of this work, the employer engagement team engages with, and accordingly has knowledge of, a diverse range of small and large employers across Victoria, including private security employers.

27. I am informed by the Manager, Employer Engagement that, following our conversation, he liaised with the employer engagement team to seek their recommendations. He then subsequently informed me by text message that the employer engagement team had recommended Unified, Wilson, MSS and Monjon Australia Pty Ltd as potential providers of private security services. I then asked him to provide me with contact details for me to contact these private security companies. I was provided with contact details for Wilson and Unified. Following my receipt of this information, at 10.43 pm on 27 March I sent an email to Mr Nolan, Mr Kamenev and Mr Menon that the employer engagement team's thinking was that Unified or Wilson should be considered for the provision of private security services.²² Based on the recommendations that I had received, I sent an email to both Unified²³ and Wilson²⁴ late on 27 March 2020 asking them to contact me urgently in order to discuss whether they may be able to assist in providing private security services in connection with the hotel quarantine program. I then informed Mr Kamenev and Mr Clements that I had emailed Unified and Wilson.²⁵
28. In preparing my witness statement, I have reviewed the bases upon which the employer engagement team recommended the engagement of Unified, Wilson and MSS as potential providers of private security services in connection with the hotel quarantine program. I am informed by the Manager, Employer Engagement that:
- (a) Unified was recommended because members of the employer engagement team had previously received positive feedback about Unified's performance in providing private security which was reflected in the fact that Unified had been awarded large-scale contracts, including a number with Metro Rail across various sites, and had a positive impression of Unified given their previous dealings with the firm;
 - (b) Wilson was recommended because DJPR had engaged Wilson on a number of occasions in the past and considered that Wilson would have the resources

²¹ DJP.156.001.8404,

²² DJP.101.002.1076.

²³ DJP.108.004.5000.

²⁴ DJP.108.004.4999.

²⁵ DJP.105.007.7884.

necessary to assist. Further, members of the employer engagement team had received positive feedback concerning Wilson's work in the non-government disability sector; and

- (c) MSS was recommended because it was considered reputable based on feedback and opinions that had previously been expressed to members of the employer engagement team.
29. At the time that the employer engagement team was being asked to provide recommendations as to appropriate private security companies, neither I nor the employer engagement team were aware of any requirement that meant that only firms that were on the Panel for the State Purchase Contracts should be approached. The urgent time frame within which we were to identify and engage with private security companies required us to identify and recommend those firms that we considered would have sufficient capacity and expertise to provide private security services in connection with the hotel quarantine program.
30. I was first informed that Unified was not on the Panel for the State Purchase Contracts by Mr Xerri by email on or around 30 March 2020. I was informed that I would need to request an exemption for DJPR to continue to engage Unified. I requested this exemption by an email that I sent on 30 March 2020.²⁶ It was considered appropriate to request the exemption because DJPR wanted to continue to procure private security services from Unified. The reasons why DJPR wanted to continue to engage Unified are set out in paragraph [80] of Mr Phemister's Witness Statement. I have reviewed that paragraph and it reflects my recollection of DJPR's thinking at that point in time.
31. I now understand that the relevant procurement policy supported the approach that the employer engagement team and I took in identifying and approaching these private security companies given that we were operating in an emergency situation.²⁷ Accordingly, I understand that no exemption was granted as it was not needed under the applicable procurement policy.

NTP Question 10: When did you make initial contact with potential security contractors? How was that done?

32. I first contacted Unified and Wilson by an email sent to each of them late at night on 27 March 2020.²⁸ At 6.52 am on 28 March 2020, Unified responded to my email and shortly afterwards, at around 7.00 am discussions with Unified commenced as to Unified's

²⁶ DJP.106.004.3679.

²⁷ DJP.006.002.0001.

²⁸ DJP.108.004.5000; DJP.108.004.4999.

capability and capacity to deliver servicing at two hotel sites by mid-afternoon that same day.²⁹ At 7.58 am on 28 March 2020, Wilson responded to my email, and discussions with Wilson commenced at around 11.00 am on the same day.³⁰

33. I contacted MSS by telephone on 29 March 2020. Following our conversation, Jamie Adams, MSS General Manager, sent me an email detailing the notes of our conversation.³¹ The notes reflected my recollection of our conversation and I responded on the same day by requesting a formal quotation from MSS.³²

NTP Question 11: What was your understanding of the capacity that Unified Security Group and Wilson Security Pty Ltd had as at 28 March 2020 to provide personnel for quarantine hotel security services from their own resources [as opposed to by reliance on sub-contractors]?

34. As set out in response to NTP Question 10, I had a conversation with a Unified representative at approximately 7.00 am on the morning of 28 March 2020. During that conversation, I was informed that Unified was in a position to allocate 20 people to the hotel quarantine program immediately with a further 100 people over the next few days. By an email sent to me late at night on 28 March 2020, Unified confirmed that it would be able to provide DJPR with 30 people to assist with the provision of private security at the Crown Promenade and 45 people to assist with the provision of private security at the Crown Metropol.³³
35. As at 28 March 2020, Wilson had informed me that it would get back to me as to its capacity to provide private security personnel, although it had indicated that it would struggle if required to provide personnel in regional locations.³⁴ On 29 March 2020, Wilson confirmed that, having completed its walk-through of the Crowne Plaza, it could provide 27 people to assist with the provision of private security at that hotel.³⁵

NTP Question 12: What discussions did you have with representatives of Unified Security Group, Wilson Security Pty Ltd and any other potential contractors over the period of up to and including 29 March 2020 inclusive regarding:

- (a) use of subcontracting and labour hire;**
(b) use of PPE and other infection control measures;
(c) rates of pay; and

²⁹ DJP.108.005.5135.
³⁰ DJP.108.005.5135.
³¹ DJP.105.002.7610.
³² DJP.105.002.7610.
³³ DJP.105.007.4370.
³⁴ DJP.104.008.6756.
³⁵ DJP.105.004.3210.

(d) training for security staff in infection control and related measures?

36. In my discussions with Unified, Wilson and MSS, I informed each firm that they would be responsible for the provision of PPE for the personnel they engaged to provide private security services as part of the hotel quarantine program. This is reflected in Mr Adam's note of our conversation on 29 March 2020,³⁶ Unified's email late at night on 28 March 2020,³⁷ and its formal offer on 30 March 2020.³⁸ The offer from Wilson³⁹ does not refer to PPE but, consistently with my discussions with Unified and MSS, my recollection is that I informed Wilson that it was responsible for the provision of PPE for its personnel.
37. I also informed Unified, Wilson and MSS that their personnel would need to undertake the Commonwealth's COVID-19 training. The fact that private security personnel should undertake this training was not a matter instructed to me but was a matter that I personally considered would be prudent given that it was the only available and widely accessible training of its kind at the relevant time. I had become aware of the training program as part of my work for the "Working for Victoria" scheme and I considered that, as a minimum, it would be beneficial if private security guards had completed this training before commencing the performance of their duties. I subsequently requested that this requirement be included in the written agreements with each private security company. Mr Adam's note of our conversation on 29 March 2020 discloses that this requirement was made expressly known to MSS.⁴⁰ Similarly, Unified's formal proposal dated 30 March 2020 expressly noted that each person employed by Unified would undertake such training.⁴¹ Wilson's offer did not refer to this requirement but, consistently with my discussions with Unified and MSS, my recollection is that I had a telephone conversation with Wilson on 29 March 2020 where the requirement for Wilson personnel to undertake this training was made expressly known to Wilson.
38. In terms of pay, I requested each of Unified, Wilson and MSS to provide a formal quotation setting out the proposed pay for each person employed by them. Wilson provided its formal quotation on 29 March 2020.⁴² Unified provided its formal quotation on 30 March 2020.⁴³ MSS provided its formal quotation on 2 April 2020.⁴⁴ These quotes were reviewed and checked internally within DJPR by Mr Xerri.⁴⁵

³⁶ DJP.105.002.7610.

³⁷ DJP.105.007.4370.

³⁸ DJP.106.001.9548.

³⁹ DJP.106.001.9553.

⁴⁰ DJP.105.002.7610.

⁴¹ DJP.106.001.9548.

⁴² DJP.106.001.9553.

⁴³ DJP.106.001.9548.

⁴⁴ DJP.110.001.4863.

⁴⁵ DJP.110.002.3688.

39. My recollection is that none of Unified, Wilson and MSS raised the possibility of subcontracting the performance of their duties at hotels located within the Melbourne CBD with me. Indeed, a key matter that was emphasised by Wilson was that it was able to provide a “significant deployment of personnel ... at a time when security numbers in the State are nearing depletion.”⁴⁶ I recall making it expressly known to the private security firms that it was imperative that staff were directly employed and paid at the relevant award rates. Unified, for example, stated to me that it had been able to “recruit specifically for this task, a total of 93 recently and long-term unemployed” Victorians to support the hotel quarantine program.⁴⁷ This indicated to me that Unified had ensured that it had employed sufficient numbers of personnel to provide the private security services that were being procured by DJPR.
40. In preparing this statement, I have reviewed my handwritten notes of discussions I had with private security firms on 28 and 29 March.⁴⁸ My notes of my discussions with the private security firms suggest that Wilson and MSS raised the possibility of subcontracting in the context of delivering private security services at regional locations. My notes suggest that Wilson informed me that it would struggle to provide private security services at regional locations but had potential supply partners that it could engage if required to provide such services. Similarly, my notes suggest that MSS informed me that, if required to provide private security services in regional Victoria, it would engage a subcontractor that it regularly used in Ballarat but that it would be able to provide those services itself in the Geelong region. MSS also referred to its subcontracting partners in the email that Mr Adams sent to me in the morning of 29 March 2020 but he did not state in that email that MSS was intending or planning, to use subcontractors.⁴⁹ My notes do not record that subcontractors would be necessary in order to provide private security services at the hotels at which it would be nominated to provide private security services within the Melbourne CBD.

NTP Question 13: How did you determine which security contractor to engage for initial hotel security arrangements over the period of up to and including 29 March 2020?

41. I have responded to this question as part of my response to NTP Question 9.

⁴⁶ DJP.106.001.9553.

⁴⁷ DJP.106.001.9548.

⁴⁸ DJP.208.002.0074.

⁴⁹ DJP.105.002.7610.

NTP Question 14: How did you communicate with security contractors over the period of up to and including 29 March 2020?

42. I communicated with security contractors by email and by telephone (including both voice conversations and text message) over the period up to and including 29 March 2020.

NTP Question 15: What advice or instructions did you receive from the Department of Health and Human Services or any other government department regarding the way in which security staff would be utilised at the quarantine hotels?

43. I did not receive any advice or instructions from DHHS or any other government department regarding the way in which security staff would be utilised at the quarantine hotels beyond the instructions set out in my response to NTP Question 7 above.

NTP Question 16: To whom were you accountable in the decisions you made regarding security contractors?

44. I was immediately accountable to Mr Nolan and Mr Clements for the decisions I made regarding security contractors.

30 MARCH ONWARDS

NTP Question 17: What role did you play from the week commencing Monday 30 March onwards in the formalising and/or expansion of arrangements for the provision of security at quarantine hotels?

45. My work early in the week commencing Monday 30 March 2020 was generally directed to obtaining an exemption for DJPR to formally engage Unified. This work involved explaining the basis upon which Unified was engaged by DJPR⁵⁰ and ensuring that Trades Hall was comfortable with Unified continuing to be engaged on an ongoing basis.⁵¹ As I explained in my response to NTP Question 9, I now understand that DJPR's engagement of Unified was consistent with the procurement policy applicable in emergency circumstances and that no exemption was in fact required for DJPR to engage Unified. At this time, I also responded to queries from Mr Xerri concerning the arrangements that had been informally agreed with each concerning, among other things, hotel allocations.⁵²

46. On 1 April 2020, I handed over my responsibilities concerning the engagement of private security companies to Mr Xerri. I sent Mr Xerri an email detailing the then current status of DJPR's engagement of Unified, Wilson and MSS.⁵³ I informed Mr Xerri that he would need

⁵⁰ DJP.106.001.9548.

⁵¹ DJP.125.002.8162.

⁵² DJP.106.003.1580.

⁵³ DJP.106.003.1580.

to commence negotiating with some of the private security companies and identified issues of which he should be particularly aware. I also informed Mr Xerri that he would assume responsibility for managing the formal contract process with the private security companies, and that he would be the liaison point for these companies. I told Mr Xerri that I would “shadow” him over the following days to assist him while he commenced taking over my responsibilities. Following this, Mr Xerri had some additional queries to which I responded.⁵⁴ I also informed him that the, Senior Investment Manager – Aviation, would be assuming Mr Nolan’s responsibilities and that he should liaise with her should he have any issues with the private security companies.⁵⁵ From this point on, Mr Xerri assumed principal responsibility for liaising with the private security companies.⁵⁶

NTP Question 18: Did you receive or become aware of any complaints or concerns regarding the identity or experience of those security companies who had been engaged to provide security services? If so –

(a) When did you receive or become aware of those complaints;

(b) what were those complaints; and

(c) what action if any was taken in respect of those complaints and concerns?

47. During my involvement in identifying and liaising with the private security companies (ie. the period between 27 March 2020 to 1 April 2020), I was not made aware of any complaints concerning the identity or experience of those private security companies that had been engaged to provide security services. I was, however, made aware of one incident involving those engaged to provide private security services.

48. On 30 March 2020, I received an email from Nigel Coppick, Unified’s State Manager, concerning an incident at the Crown Metropol. Mr Coppick’s email relevantly stated:⁵⁷

I hope you are well, at 0307Hrs we had a significant issue, where a male from room 1516 decamped from his room, as he was in need of a cigarette.

The Male in question was quite agitated and highly augmentative, he refused direction from officers and egressed to the ground floor.

Officers contacted our night shift Duty Manager in relation to the situation.

At 0309Hrs, Duty Manager greeted the Male in question, after a brief discussion the male complied with directive and was escorted back to his accommodation [sic].

⁵⁴ DJP.106.003.1580.

⁵⁵ DJP.106.003.1580.

⁵⁶ See, eg DJP.110.001.3058; DJP.110.001.2706.

⁵⁷ DJP.105.002.6079.

As indicated during our meeting the officers are complying with hands off Policy

49. I forwarded this email to Mr Nolan and Mr Clements.⁵⁸ Mr Nolan considered that the incident may provide an appropriate basis for obtaining further Victoria Police assistance at the relevant hotels.⁵⁹ No immediate action was required to be taken given that the incident had been appropriately managed by those engaged to provide private security.
50. Following the handover of my responsibilities to Mr Xerri on 1 April 2020, I was made aware of three complaints concerning the identity or experience of those private security companies that had been engaged to provide security services.
51. The first complaint was one that I received directly on or around 2 April 2020. I was informed that a guard employed by Unified had been coughing outside the door of a guest throughout the night. I sent a text message to Mr Coppick informing him that it was critical that staff not attend work if they were unwell or feeling sick. Mr Coppick responded by text message informing me that Unified's personnel would be temperature checked at the commencement and conclusion of their shifts and that he would follow up and deal with this matter directly.
52. The second complaint occurred on 3 April 2020 when Gonul Serbest, CEO of Global Victoria, called Mr Xerri to provide feedback on Wilson's performance. Ms Serbest's email queried whether Wilson could be replaced or as a private security provider given that the feedback from all stakeholders, including DHHS, as to their performance had been poor.⁶⁰ I am informed by Mr Xerri that the feedback Ms Serbest provided concerning Wilson included Wilson's reluctance to search bags from those attending at the site and to perform food deliveries, Wilson personnel failing to identify themselves to hotel staff so as to enable hotel staff to understand who to approach concerning security issues and a Wilson manager sweating profusely during their shift so as to cause concern among hotel staff and guests as to whether they were well enough to attend work. Upon receipt of this email, Mr Clements asked Mr Xerri and I whether it would be possible to replace Wilson under its contract.⁶¹ Mr Xerri responded by observing that Wilson had not yet been formally engaged under contract but that the only provider that would be able to assist was Unified.⁶² I responded by stating that it was necessary to have a discussion with Wilson concerning its performance and noting that MSS may be able to replace Wilson once it had been formally prepared.⁶³
53. The second complaint occurred on 14 April 2020. It concerned an inappropriate note slipped by a guard under the door of a guest's hotel room. It was forwarded to me in a chain

⁵⁸ DJP.105.002.6079.

⁵⁹ DJP.105.002.6079.

⁶⁰ DJP.105.005.3836.

⁶¹ DJP.105.005.3836.

⁶² DJP.105.005.3836.

⁶³ DJP.105.005.3836.

of emails by Mr Xerri on the same day.⁶⁴ I took no action in relation to this complaint because it was being managed by Mr Xerri and Mr Clements and I understood that it had been sent to me for my information only.

NTP Question 19: In the period from 30 March onwards what discussions/communications did you have with representatives from security companies about how they would source and recruit security guards for the hotel quarantine program?

54. I did not have any discussions or communications with representatives from security companies about how they would source and recruit security guards for the hotel quarantine program on either 30 or 31 March 2020. I handed over my responsibilities for dealing and liaising with the private security companies to Mr Xerri on 1 April 2020.

NTP Question 20: In the period from 30 March onwards did you give any direction to or make any request of those representatives that they recruit guards from any particular work location or company? if so, what were those directions and requests?

55. In the period from 30 March onwards, I did not give any direction to or make any request of any representatives from security companies that they recruit guards from any particular work location or company.
56. On 7 April 2020 I introduced the CEO of Unified to the Chief Commercial Officer of ISS and sent each party the other's contact information by text so they could discuss the possibility of forming a partnership. This was a facilitated introduction for them to pursue (or not) as they saw fit. Mr Xerri has advised me that Unified and ISS did not end up pursuing the relationship.

NTP Question 21: Did you play a role in the negotiation of written contracts for the provision of security services? If so, what was that role?

57. I did not play a role in the negotiation of written contracts for the provision of security services. I understand that the negotiation of these contracts occurred after I handed over my responsibilities to Mr Xerri.

⁶⁴ DJP.105.003.8222.

NTP Question 22: Did you play a role in the supervision or contract management of the security companies that were engaged to provide security services to quarantine hotels? If so, what was that role?

58. I did not play a role in the supervision or contract management of the security companies that were engaged to provide security services to quarantine hotels.

NTP Question 23: When did you cease involvement in the hotel quarantine program?

59. I ceased being responsible for dealing and liaising with private security companies on 1 April 2020 when I handed my responsibilities over to Mr Xerri. My involvement in the hotel quarantine program ceased on or around 7 April 2020 when I stopped shadowing Mr Xerri to assist him in transitioning to managing the responsibilities for which I had been responsible up to 1 April 2020.

sign
here ►



print
name

Katrina Marie Currie

date

24 August 2020

CONFIDENTIAL – COPY FOR USE IN THE BOARD OF INQUIRY AND BY THE PARTIES WITH STANDING BEFORE ONLY.
NOT FOR USE FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE. NOT TO BE PUBLISHED OR PROVIDED TO ANY OTHER PARTY WITHOUT DJPR APPROVAL.
DJPR RESERVES ITS RIGHTS TO PII, LPP AND/OR PRIVACY CLAIMS