

IN THE MATTER OF the *Inquiries Act 2014*

AND IN THE MATTER OF a Board of Inquiry into the COVID-19 Hotel Quarantine Program

WITNESS STATEMENT OF MATTHEW LOUGHNAN

This is the witness statement of Matthew Loughnan, Airport Services Manager – Melbourne for dnata Airport Services Pty Ltd, in response to the Notice to Produce dated 21 August 2020 issued by the Board of Inquiry into the COVID-19 Hotel Quarantine Program:

Introduction

1. *What is your title and role within dnata Airport Services Pty Ltd (dnata)?*

Airport Services Manager, overseeing the Melbourne operation. This includes passenger, ramp and cargo services provided by dnata Airport Services Pty Ltd at Melbourne airport.

2. *What is your relevant professional background and work history?*

21 years in the aviation industry

Services provided by dnata

3. *Please describe the services that dnata usually provides.*

dnata provides airport ground handling services at multiple Australian airports, including passenger and baggage handling, cargo handling and ramp services.

4. *Prior to the Hotel Quarantine Program, what services (if any) had dnata (or a company in its corporate group, if relevant), provided to the Victorian government?*

dnata provided no services to the Victorian government prior to the implementation of the Hotel Quarantine Program. In parallel with the Hotel Quarantine Program, dnata was initially requested to provide services at Melbourne airport assisting with the registration of arriving passengers and movement onto buses to hotels.

5. *How did dnata come to provide services as part of the Hotel Quarantine Program?*

Initial contact with dnata for the provision of passenger assistance services at Melbourne airport was from Boston Consulting Group, who was working with Melbourne airport.

6. *When did dnata reach an agreement with the Victorian government to provide services as part of the Hotel Quarantine Program?*

Agreement as to rates/services was agreed between myself and [REDACTED] from DJPR via email on Monday 30th March.

The initial request for provision of services at Melbourne airport was made on Saturday night, 28th March 2020 and the services were provided the next day at the airport on Sunday morning, 29th March. Further discussions took place during the day on Sunday including a site visit to a quarantine hotel on Sunday afternoon and services at hotels were commenced on Sunday evening.

A formal Agreement for Professional Services (Self-isolation Coordination and Management Services at Hotel Quarantine Sites) between DJPR and dnata was provided in April 2020 (see

documents produced for NTP-092: dnata 14 and dnata 15). Following 1 July 2020, the contract for the provision of services in connection with the Hotel Quarantine Program was transferred to the DHHS and a formal agreement covering the provision of services at the airport and hotels was executed between dnata and DHHs (See documents produced for NTP-092: dnata 16, dnata 17 and dnata 18).

7. *When did dnata commence providing services to the Hotel Quarantine Program?*

The initial request for provision of services at Melbourne airport was made on Saturday night, 28th March 2020 and the services were provided the next day at the airport on Sunday morning, 29th March. Further discussions took place during the day on Sunday including a site visit to a quarantine hotel on Sunday afternoon and services at hotels were commenced on Sunday evening.

8. *At what hotels did dnata provide services, and over what period?*

HOTEL	ONLINE	OFFLINE
CROWN PROMENADE	30MAR20	12JUL20
CROWN METROPOLE	30MAR20	14JUL20
CROWNE PLAZA	30MAR20	04MAY20
PAN PACIFIC	02APR20	13JUL20
WELCOME MECURE	05APR20	07JUL20
PARK ROYAL MEL APT	06APR20	14JUL20
SHERATON FOUR POINTS	07APR20	11JUL20
HOLIDAY INN MEL APT	08APR20	14JUL20
TRAVELODGE DOCKLANDS	10APR20	26APR20
TRAVELODGE SOUTHBANK	12APR20	15MAY20
NOVOTEL ON COLLINS	12APR20	11JUL20
NOVOTEL SOUTH WHARF	17APR20	26MAY20
HOLIDAY INN FLINDERS LANE	20APR20	14JUL20
MARRIOTT HOTEL	20APR20	12JUL20
STAMFORD PLAZA	30APR20	22JUN20
GRAND CHANCELLOR	23MAY20	27JUN20
PULLMAN HOTEL	28MAY20	07JUL20
RYDGES ON SWANSTON	27JUN20	12JUL20

General services provided by dnata

9. *In respect of each quarantine hotel at which your company has provided services, please provide details of:*

(a) *what services were provided;*

Assisting with passenger arrivals into the hotel and registration for DHHS purposes.

Hotel concierge service compiling care packages, but not delivery to rooms (24/7 coverage on-site coordination initially, moving to 2 shifts a day – 7:30am to 11:30pm)

Provision of ramp staff to handle passenger baggage from busses to hotel reception for arrivals and from hotel reception to vehicles for departures from hotels.

(b) *what areas of the hotel staff worked in; and*

Front of House and Reception areas – no room contact.

(c) which staff of dnata provided those services?

The 'concierge' roles were filled by members of our Passenger Services team. In normal dnata operations, the Passenger Services staff facilitate the customer facing roles at the airport including check-in, arrival and departure functions. The handling of guest baggage to and from the vehicles was completed by our 'Ramp' team members who handled passenger baggage and tarmac equipment in the dnata operation.

10. *What directions, information or requests were given to dnata by any government department or agency, in relation to the Hotel Quarantine Program? Please provide details.*

Initial instructions were provided over the phone and daily calls with DJPR continued throughout the initial phase of the program (first weeks).

During the first two days, meetings at hotels were organised by DJPR – site visits for new hotels. These sites visits were arranged for the first three hotels, then we replicated model for new hotels without the site visit (see documents produced for NTP-092: dnata 05 and dnata 06).

dnata was also provided with documents outlining the proposed set up of hotel registration services and roles and lists of key contacts and role descriptions for hotel services (see documents disclosed in Notice to Produce NTP-092: dnata 10 and dnata 12).

11. *How and how frequently did dnata staff report to the Global Victoria team within the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR)?*

dnata staff on-site were speaking multiple times a day to DJPR representatives, being a mix of face to face discussions at the hotels plus phone calls.

12. *What, if any, reports did dnata provide to DJPR with respect to any issues identified by dnata staff? Please provide details.*

No written reporting. Operational issues were raised as and when they occurred with DJPR staff.

13. *How were issues otherwise communicated by the dnata site managers to each of DJPR, the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police? What issues were raised and how were they dealt with?*

Main channel of communication was with DJPR who we were provided as the reporting line. Operational issues were only raised as and when they occurred.

Dealing with complaints

14. *What process was in place for dnata receiving and investigating complaints or concerns about:*
(a) hotels;
(b) security companies; and
(c) other contractors?

dnata had no role in terms of dealing with complaints from quarantined passengers about any part of the Hotel Quarantine Program. In terms of dnata's internal complaints process for our own staff, it would have been usual internal process of initial reporting to the staff member's line manager and escalation within dnata management, as needed.

15. *What complaints and concerns (if any) were raised? In relation to any complaints and concerns:*
- (a) *what were the details;*
 - (b) *how was the complaint or concern dealt with; and*
 - (c) *what was the outcome?*

The only material concern raised by dnata was in relation to the arrival of a charter flight from Montevideo. This flight had approximately 175 people on board, but 60-80 were known to be positive for COVID-19. dnata management had a concern about the number of known COVID-19 cases on this flight and requested that dnata staff not be involved in the provision of services to that hotel and for that flight. DJPR agreed with that request and no services were provided by dnata for that flight and the allocated hotel.

16. *Where issues of safety were raised with the dnata site manager, what process was followed to investigate and resolve those concerns? Please outline the issues raised and how they were resolved.*

No issues of safety were raised by dnata personnel working on site at any of the hotels.

Departure of quarantined passengers

17. *What, if any, role did dnata staff play in the release of quarantined passengers at the conclusion of their quarantine process?*

Handled baggage in the reception area to assist departing passengers. Not collecting bags from rooms, but assisting with baggage from reception into taxis and other vehicles.

18. *Who requested dnata staff to facilitate quarantined passengers' departure?*

This was part of the overall services agreed with DJPR. Number of ramp staff required each day coordinated with DJPR for each hotel depending on the number of departing passengers and timings.

19. *What, if any, directions did DJPR or any other agency give to dnata staff in facilitating the release of formerly quarantined passengers?*

DJPR indicated how many staff needed each day for each hotel for handling baggage for passengers (concierge services for departing passengers). No other role in terms of release of passengers.

Safety of dnata staff

20. *Did dnata maintain a physical presence at each hotel? During what period each day?*

Yes. At least one dnata staff member was initially stationed at each hotel on a 24 hour basis, but this was subsequently changed to a physical presence from 07:30 to 23:00 daily in two shifts. These dnata personnel provided an onsite concierge service, but no contact with quarantined passengers or rooms.

21. *If dnata staff were to maintain a presence at each hotel, would they have come into contact with hotel, agency or security staff?*

Yes. dnata personnel would have interacted with hotel, agency and security staff on an as-needed basis. dnata staff were generally provided our own workspace that was separate from

other contractors/agency staff. No passenger contact except on arrival and departure at reception level/curb-side only.

22. *Prior to any agreement being reached with the Victorian government, was there any discussion or negotiation regarding infection control, personal protective equipment and specialised training for dnata staff who would be present at hotels involved in the Hotel Quarantine Program?*

There were initial discussions on the use and availability of PPE. No discussion on infection control or specialised training.

23. *What (if any) training was provided to that staff regarding COVID-19 and how to work in a safe manner? By whom was the training provided?*

DJPR provided guidelines on how to work safely, including the use of PPE, as part of the roles and responsibilities document provided to dnata (see documents produced for PTP-092: dnata 12). dnata briefed its personnel working at hotel locations on those guidelines and requirements, but there was no formal training provided.

24. *What personal protective equipment (if any) was provided to dnata staff to use when working at a quarantine hotel?*

PPE (consisting of face masks and gloves) was provided by dnata initially. Following the first few days of operation at each hotel, a stock of PPE would also have been available at the hotel – face masks, gloves and hand sanitiser.

25. *What training was provided with respect to the proper use of personal protective equipment so provided?*

No formal training was provided for the use of PPE.

26. *What onsite supervision arrangements were in place for dnata staff at each quarantine hotel?*

Apart from arrivals and departure times, dnata staff onsite was only one person per hotel per shift. That person would then act as the site supervisor at passenger arrivals and departures when more dnata personnel were present.

Other information

27. *If you wish to include any additional information in your witness statement, please set it out below.*

None.

DATE: 28 August 2020

SIGNED:



Matthew Loughnan