

**IN THE MATTER OF** the *Inquiries Act 2014* (Vic)

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

**Statement of** Alfred Health - Nurse  
Manager

**Introduction**

1. I, Alfred Health - Nurse Manager, Infection Prevention and Healthcare Epidemiology Unit Nurse Manager, Alfred Health, say as follows in response to the Notice to Produce a Witness Statement issued by the Board of Inquiry and dated 18 August 2020 (**NTP**).
2. Under cover of a letter dated 18 August 2020, the Board of Inquiry has asked me to provide answers to 33 questions in relation to the Hotel Quarantine Program. This statement seeks to respond to those questions, however I do not possess relevant experience, knowledge or information concerning a number of matters raised by them. My involvement with the Hotel Quarantine Program is limited to my work in the Infection Prevention and Healthcare Epidemiology Unit.
3. I have advised the Proper Officer of Alfred Health, Ms Simone Alexander of the matters I am unable to assist the Inquiry with. It is my understanding that she will seek to address those issues in a statement she is to provide to the Inquiry.
4. The answers to the Inquiry's questions set out in this statement are included by me partly in reliance of my direct knowledge of Alfred Health's involvement with the Hotel Quarantine Program, and also on the basis of information obtained by me after having made enquiries of Alfred Health staff and conducted a review of documentation held by Alfred Health to the best of my ability in the time available.

**NTP Question 1: What is your title and role within Alfred Health?**

5. I am employed by Alfred Health. My job title is Infection Prevention and Healthcare Epidemiology Unit Nurse Manager.
6. The Infection Prevention and Healthcare Epidemiology Unit develops, implements and audits infection prevention strategy across Alfred Health and provides advice and support to all consumers of the infection prevention service.
7. I am the Nurse Manager of the Unit's Infection Prevention Program which comprises the Infection Prevention team and the Staff Immunisation and Exposure management team.
8. I am responsible for the leadership, management, direction and implementation of the Infection Prevention and Control program across Alfred Health.

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

9. I qualified as a registered nurse in 1998 (BSc (Hons) Nursing from Leeds Metropolitan University, UK).
10. I worked in high dependency and intensive care environments from 1998 until 2005.

11. I have worked in infection prevention since 2001, originally in the UK.
12. I have worked at Alfred Health in the Infection Prevention Department since 2005.
13. In 2013, I was appointed Acting Manager (Infection Prevention and Healthcare Epidemiology Unit Nurse Manager). In 2016 I took on the role permanently in a full-time capacity.

### **Involvement of Alfred Health in the Hotel Quarantine Program**

#### **NTP Question 3: When and how did Alfred Health first become aware that there was to be a role for Alfred Health staff in the Hotel Quarantine Program?**

14. I was not involved in the initial discussions regarding Alfred Health's involvement in the Hotel Quarantine Program. I do not know when Alfred Health was first made aware of the potential for Alfred Health staff to be involved in the Hotel Quarantine Program.
15. On around 1 June 2020 I was consulted by my line manager ( [REDACTED], Acting Clinical Service Director, Alfred Specialty Medicine) and asked to consider what would be required for Alfred Health to undertake an infection prevention review of hotel services across Melbourne housing quarantined individuals.
16. At that stage I believe I was generally aware that Alfred Health was considering putting forward a proposal to the Department of Health and Human Services (**DHHS**) for service provision to the Hotel Quarantine Program, but I was not aware of the scope of the proposal.
17. I prepared a brief outline of the factors that would need to be considered in reviewing infection prevention within hotel quarantine services and the resources that may be required. This was to provide the Alfred Health executive team with a broad understanding of the resourcing that may be required if Alfred Health was to assist with review of infection prevention within the Hotel Quarantine Program.

#### **NTP Question 4: Has Alfred Health entered into any agreement with the Victorian government to provide services as part of the Hotel Quarantine Program? If so, please provide details, including whether the agreement was in writing or otherwise and whether there was any variation of that agreement over time. If in writing, please provide a copy.**

18. From 17 June 2020, simultaneous with the commencement of operations at the Brady Hotel, Alfred Health has provided clinical care services and infection prevention consultation to the Hotel Quarantine Program. Alfred Health has subsequently provided those services to other hotels within the Hotel Quarantine Program.
19. My involvement has been limited to providing input internally within Alfred Health regarding infection prevention review for the Hotel Quarantine Program. I am not able to say what agreements, if any, are in place between Alfred Health and the Victorian government.

**NTP Question 5: Prior to reaching any agreement with the Victorian government, was there any discussion, negotiation, direction or terms agreed as to:**

- (a) standards or processes to ensure adequate infection control;
- (b) personal protective equipment; and/or
- (c) specialised training for Alfred Health staff working in the Hotel Quarantine Program?

**If so, please describe.**

20. I was not involved in the discussions with the Victorian government and am unable to answer this question.

**NTP Question 6: Does Alfred Health currently provide services to the Hotel Quarantine Program? If so, what services do you currently provide?**

21. Yes.
22. I am not directly working onsite with the Hotel Quarantine Program so I am unable to detail the full scope of services currently provided by Alfred Health. I am aware that Alfred Health undertakes clinical leadership services and I can confirm that Alfred Health provides infection prevention consultation, including onsite review and PPE education for all staff within the Hotel Quarantine Program.
23. The Infection Prevention Unit at Alfred Health is available for infection prevention advice and consultation to the clinical managers and the dedicated Alfred Health infection prevention team within the Hotel Quarantine Program.
24. The Infection Prevention Unit at Alfred Health also undertakes contact tracing for all staff working on site at the hotels with the support of the DHHS (this includes staff from Alfred Health, Spotless, Department of Justice and Community Safety, DHHS, Victoria Police and hotel staff).
25. In the event a positive Covid case is identified by DHHS within the Hotel Quarantine Program, Alfred Health is notified and our Unit identifies and contacts all potential close contacts of the Covid positive person. The Infection Prevention Unit provides employees with information regarding the need to isolate, the duration of isolation and testing required during isolation. Follow up at the end of the 14 day isolation period prior to staff returning to work is also provided to confirm they are asymptomatic and have received a negative swab result.

**NTP Question 7: How have the services that Alfred Health provides to the Hotel Quarantine Program changed over time?**

26. My involvement in the Hotel Quarantine Program has been limited to consultation regarding infection prevention measures and contact tracing. Accordingly, I can only comment on changes to that aspect of the services Alfred Health provides to the Hotel Quarantine Program.
27. Since early June 2020 I have assisted with specific aspects of the Program at the request of my line manager [REDACTED] and the Alfred Health executive,

however I have always remained in my current role (focussed on the on-site infection prevention and control program at Alfred Health). I have never had a dedicated position within the Hotel Quarantine Program.

28. I provide the following information which sets out my understanding of Alfred Health's overall involvement with the program, however that is necessarily limited given the scope of my involvement.
29. As outlined above at question 3, in early June 2020 I was asked to provide preliminary advice regarding possible infection prevention review for the hotels. I understand that prior to that Alfred Health had some involvement in the Hotel Quarantine Program, but I believe it was limited and Alfred Health did not have any role in the provision of or advice about infection prevention services.
30. On 27 May 2020 Alfred Health was advised that there had been a Covid positive case in Rydges Hotel. The Infection Prevention Unit at Alfred Health performed contact tracing for Alfred Health nursing staff who had worked at Rydges Hotel over the relevant period. Therefore, I was aware that Alfred Health was providing some nursing services to the Hotel Quarantine Program at that time.
31. In early June I became aware from my line manager that Alfred Health may start providing infection control services to the Hotel Quarantine Program and possibly other assistance as well, including nursing care. At some point in early to mid June I was advised that Alfred Health would be providing infection prevention consultation at the Brady Hotel when it opened as a new hotel in the Hotel Quarantine Program dedicated to accommodating Covid positive passengers. I understood that the plan was for infection control services to subsequently be rolled out to all hotels in the Hotel Quarantine Program.
32. The Infection Prevention Unit at Alfred Health initiated the development of an audit tool to assess infection prevention measures within the Hotel Quarantine Program on 11 June 2020.
33. The Brady Hotel commenced operation on 17 June 2020 and from that date Alfred Health provided the nursing workforce and infection prevention consultation at the Brady Hotel. I am aware that Spotless was subsequently engaged by Alfred Health for cleaning services at the hotel.
34. A staged roll out of clinical services and infection prevention consultation followed at other hotels in the Hotel Quarantine Program.
35. I am aware that on 13 July 2020, Alfred Health engaged Healthcare Australia to provide infection control consultation services to the hotels. Around that time the Alfred Health Infection Prevention Unit had a very significant work load and the engagement of Healthcare Australia assisted with resourcing. Since that time Healthcare Australia has conducted the onsite reviews of the hotels. Alfred Health Infection Prevention Unit continue to provide infection prevention advice and consultation as required.
36. From around 30 July 2020, our Unit increased its contact tracing services for the Hotel Quarantine Program. Prior to that we had only provided contact tracing for Alfred Health and Spotless employees at the hotels. Alfred Health now provides contact tracing services for all staff in the Hotel Quarantine Program, as outlined above at question 6.

**Provision of staff to quarantine hotels**

**NTP Question 8: For each quarantine hotel to which Alfred Health has provided staff, please state:**

- (a) the name of the hotel(s);**
- (b) the number of staff rostered to each shift at each hotel;**
- (c) the specialisation(s) of staff rostered;**
- (d) the qualifications and experience of staff rostered;**
- (e) the number of shifts per day; and**
- (f) the duties and responsibilities of the staff rostered for each shift.**

37. I do not know and am unable to answer this question.

**NTP Question 9: As far as you are aware, were medical staff provided to hotels by any agency or organisation other than Alfred Health? If so, what were those agencies or organisations?**

38. I am not aware of the arrangements for provision of medical staff in the hotels.

**NTP Question 10: To your knowledge, were any Alfred Health staff rostered to work at quarantine hotels also working during the relevant period at other locations (including at the Alfred Hospital or at aged care facilities)? If so, please provide details.**

39. On 27 May 2020 Alfred Health was advised that there had been a Covid positive case in Rydges Hotel of a non-Alfred Health staff member. The Infection Prevention Unit at Alfred Health performed contact tracing for Alfred Health nursing staff who had worked at Rydges Hotel over the relevant period.

40. Through contact tracing around that time we identified 22 Alfred Health staff who had worked at the Rydges Hotel over the relevant period. Of those 22 staff, one had worked at the Alfred Hospital and one had worked at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. We identified that three of the Alfred Health staff had also worked for the YNA agency at Rydges Hotel.

41. I am otherwise not involved in the rostering of staff and am not in a position to answer this question further.

**NTP Question 11: Has Alfred Health provided any services or assistance to the Quarantine Hotel Program, other than providing staff? If so, please provide details.**

42. I refer to my answer to questions 6 and 7.

### **Direction and Decision Making**

#### **NTP Question 12: How were decisions made about rostering of Alfred Health staff (including relating to numbers of staff, their experience and their specialisation(s))?**

43. I am unable to comment on rostering of staff as I have had no involvement in this.

#### **NTP Question 13: For each hotel at which Alfred Health provided services:**

- (a) who was your primary contact (if any) at Department of Jobs Precincts and Regions;
  - (b) who was your primary contact (if any) at the Department of Health and Human Services; and
  - (c) what directions, information and requests (if any) were given to you by either the Department of Health and Human Services or the Department of Jobs Precincts and Regions regarding medical care and duties?
44. From 30 July 2020 Alfred Health took over the contact tracing within the hotels for all workers within the Hotel Quarantine Program.
45. If the DHHS becomes aware of a positive case of a staff member working in a hotel within the Hotel Quarantine Program, DHHS notifies Alfred Health and we commence contact tracing. DHHS provides Alfred Health with information regarding the exposure, time frames and period of infectivity and information on index case and contact details.
46. The Operation Soteria Commander Emergency Accommodation (currently [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] share this role) provide Alfred Health with rosters and contact details for all hotel disciplines and key lines of reporting for each discipline on request.
47. Alfred Health reports details of the contact tracing to the DHHS, detailing staff who are close contacts. These details are sent to a DHHS team email address.

#### **NTP Question 14: Have any directions, information or requests been given to Alfred Health or its staff by any other Victorian government department or agency, in relation to the Hotel Quarantine Program? If so, please provide details.**

48. In relation to the contact tracing services provided by Alfred Health, Alfred Health follows the recommendations from the DHHS regarding classifications for close contacts and quarantine.

#### **NTP Question 15: Have the directions, information and requests given to you by any government department or agency changed over time? If so, please provide details.**

49. The DHHS guidelines around contact tracing have changed over time. For example, around 28 April 2020 the DHHS guideline was altered to include a broader symptom subset for health care workers. More recently the guidelines have changed to include positive cases being cleared based on symptoms only and no requirement for

clearance swabs if people have not been severely unwell. Alfred Health has adopted the DHHS directives and guidelines in its contact tracing service.

### **Training and Supervision**

#### **NTP Question 16: What training was provided to your staff by Alfred Health regarding COVID-19 and how to work in a safe manner?**

50. The Infection Prevention Team at Alfred Health has undertaken many hours of PPE education and transmission precaution based training for Alfred Health employees. Information videos, training packages and guidelines have been developed and made available to staff. Alfred Health's guidelines are based on state and national guidance.
51. Alfred Health nursing staff receive training on infection prevention measures and PPE within the Alfred Hospital. In addition to this, I understand that staff working in the Hotel Quarantine Program receive further training on infection prevention measures and PPE within the hotel environment.
52. Training of Alfred Health staff within the Hotel Quarantine Program has been undertaken by Alfred Health and more recently Healthcare Australia, utilising the on the ground infection prevention teams, clinical nurse managers, nursing team leaders and clinical nurse consultants within the hotels.

#### **NTP Question 17: Did any Victorian government department or agency provide training to Alfred Hospital staff regarding COVID-19 and how to work in a safe manner in the Hotel Quarantine Program? If so, which government department or agency provided training and what was it?**

53. I am unable to answer this question.

#### **NTP Question 18: What onsite supervision was in place for Alfred Health's staff at each hotel?**

54. My response here is limited by the scope of my involvement. I am not able to comment on the onsite supervision for staff prior to Alfred Health providing clinical services in the hotels.
55. With the commencement of the Brady Hotel on 17 June 2020 I understand that Alfred Health staff at that hotel received onsite supervision from clinical nurse managers, nurse team leaders and clinical nurse consultants within the hotel.
56. As Alfred Health has rolled out clinical and infection prevention services to other hotels, the same supervision arrangements have been put in place for those hotels.

### **Personal protective equipment (PPE)**

#### **NTP Question 19: What PPE (if any) was provided to Alfred Health staff by:**

- (a) any, and if so, which government department or agency;

**(b) Alfred Health?**

57. I understand that PPE distribution pathways within the hotels have changed over time, but I am unable to comment on when those changes occurred and what PPE was provided by which agencies.

**NTP Question 20: Were your Alfred Health staff at any time required to provide their own PPE for their work at quarantine hotels?**

58. Alfred Health employees are able to contact the Alfred Health Infection Prevention Unit and seek advice or raise concerns regarding their PPE. I am not aware of any issues raised specifically in relation to Alfred Health staff having to provide their own PPE onsite at quarantine hotels.

**NTP Question 21: What directions or training did Alfred Health staff receive about when and how to use PPE, in relation to the Hotel Quarantine Program? Who gave that direction and provided that training?**

59. Alfred Health staff receive both general and Covid-19 specific training in infection prevention measures and use of PPE at Alfred Health. With the commencement of operations at the Brady Hotel on 17 June 2020, two staff from Alfred Health's infection prevention team were on site to provide PPE training to Alfred Health staff. This included when and how to don and doff PPE effectively for staff.
60. PPE training videos have been developed and PPE matrices have been developed, in consultation with myself and the Director of Infectious Diseases ( [REDACTED] ).
61. PPE training at the Hotel Quarantine Program now is the responsibility of the dedicated quarantine infection prevention team (engaged through Healthcare Australia). The team educates clinical team leaders at the hotels who engage in a "train the trainer" model. A record of education and training for staff has been implemented.

**NTP Question 22: As far as you are aware, was there ever a shortage of PPE at quarantine hotels? If so, how was that shortage managed?**

62. I understand that there was a shortage of PPE noted at the Brady Hotel on commencement. Minimal supplies of masks, gloves and eye protection were observed. There also did not appear to be a plan for monitoring use of PPE and consumables over time, to assist with ordering and stock level requirements. I believe that Alfred Health provided further PPE to the hotel.

**NTP Question 23: Was Alfred Health ever asked to provide PPE to anyone at quarantine hotels other than Alfred Health staff? If so, please provide details.**

63. I do not know and am unable to answer this.

### Other equipment

**NTP Question 24: Other than PPE, what equipment (if any) was provided by:**

(a) any, and if so, which government department or agency;

(b) Alfred Health,

**for your staff use at quarantine hotels (for example, equipment to monitor blood pressure, SaO2 monitors etc)?**

64. The only equipment I am aware of that was provided by an external agency is blood sugar level monitoring equipment. I am uncertain who was responsible for issuing this equipment.
65. I am not able to comment who was responsible for issuing any other equipment at the hotels.

**NTP Question 25: As far as you are aware, was there ever a shortage of necessary equipment (other than PPE) at quarantine hotels? If so, how was that shortage managed?**

66. I am not aware of any shortages of equipment.

### Complaints and concerns

**NTP Question 26: Who was responsible for identifying and addressing health and safety risks to Alfred Health staff arising from the Hotel Quarantine Program?**

67. I am unable to comment broadly on this because my involvement with the Hotel Quarantine Program has been limited to infection prevention consultation and the contact tracing services, as outlined above. My comments below are made from that perspective.
68. With the opening of the Brady Hotel on 17 June 2020, Alfred Health had responsibility for clinical management and also commenced providing infection prevention consultation. Alfred Health provided two infection prevention nurse consultants on site for infection prevention consultation and on-site review of infection prevention measures.
69. The infection prevention nurse consultants undertook an audit which looked at the physical environment, hotel guidelines, staff education, competency training, staff screening and wellness checks, passenger screening and wellness checks, movement and transfer of passengers process, staffing for hotel, stock storage, PPE management, hand hygiene, room and facility environmental cleaning with assessment of cleaning, workstations cleaning and social distancing, waste management, kitchen management, housekeeping and soiled linen/laundry, clean supply room management and lift management.
70. The purpose of the audit is to identify opportunities for improvement in infection prevention measures. Any risks/opportunities for improvement are then fed back to the relevant agency or contractor and improvements made to the site.

71. The audits seek to identify infection prevention risks broadly. Any risks detected at the quarantine hotels would be escalated via the team leader to the clinical managers or the DHHS team leader for rectification depending on the issues identified.
72. This same process takes place at each of the hotels in which Alfred Health provides clinical staff and infection prevention consultation.

**NTP Question 27: What risks were identified? What was done (if anything) to mitigate those risks? In your opinion, were those measures adequate and effective?**

73. With Alfred Health providing services to the Brady Hotel and rolling out services to other hotels, Alfred Health's infection prevention measures have been implemented at each of the hotels.
74. Alfred Health has in place a process for auditing infection prevention measures at each of the hotels as outlined in my answer to question 26 above. These onsite reviews occur at regular intervals.
75. The Brady Hotel was a "new" hotel to the Hotel Quarantine Program. It commenced operation on 17 June 2020 and was to accommodate Covid-19 positive passengers.
76. With the commencement of operations at the Brady Hotel on 17 June 2020, an onsite audit of the infection prevention measures was undertaken and the infection prevention Unit at Alfred Health made recommendations regarding the following –
  - The PPE to be worn by different groups of staff (in the form of a PPE matrix);
  - The cleaning practices (high touch point cleaning) and use of an audit program utilising florescent markers to determine effectiveness of cleaning;
  - The sick leave process for staff. An Alfred Health online assessment form was available so sickness related to Covid symptoms could be logged and followed up accordingly by Alfred Health and return to work at the appropriate opportunity.
77. These measures, and the ongoing review process, seek to ensure that infection prevention measures within the hotels are best practice.

**NTP Question 28: Who was responsible for identifying and acting on complaints or concerns regarding work conditions for Alfred Health staff in relation to the Hotel Quarantine Program?**

78. As I have outlined, Alfred Health has instituted a process for review of the infection prevention measures at the hotels. The review process identifies any concerns regarding infection prevention measures relevant to staff.
79. Relevant changes to practice would be implemented by Alfred Health clinical managers and, I believe, personnel from DHHS who were on site.

**NTP Question 29: What complaints and concerns (if any) were raised? In relation to each, please:**

- (a) provide the details of each complaint;**
- (b) explain how the complaint or concern was dealt with, including any persons to whom the complaint was relayed; and**
- (c) describe what outcome, if any, was achieved in relation to the subject matter of the complaint?**

80. As I have outlined above, the onsite reviews seek to identify any non-compliance with Alfred Health's infection prevention measures for rectification. I am otherwise not aware of specific complaints.

**NTP Question 30: Did you or Alfred Health identify or receive notice of any poor or unacceptable conduct by any person in connection with the Hotel Quarantine Program? If so:**

- (a) what were the details;**
- (b) how were those issues dealt with; and**
- (c) what was the outcome?**

81. I am not aware of any unacceptable conduct by any person

**NTP Question 31: As far as you are aware, have any staff from Alfred Health involved in the Hotel Quarantine Program tested positive for COVID-19? If so (without providing information that would identify such persons specifically) please provide the details of how you became so aware, including the dates, and any hotel(s) at which such staff had been rostered prior to testing positive.**

82. No Alfred Health staff have tested positive that we are aware of, as a result at working at the hotels.

### **Post-shift Arrangements**

**NTP Question 32: What (if any) direction or guidance was provided to Alfred Health staff by:**

- (a) any, and if so which, government department;**
- (b) Alfred Health,**

**regarding precautions to undertake after completing their duties at quarantine hotels?**

83. I am unable to comment on any direction by government departments.

84. Currently, all Alfred Health/Spotless staff, in line with current guidance are advised to monitor their health and get tested if they become unwell. They are not to attend work and must notify their manager and complete the Alfred Health online assessment

form so appropriate follow up can take place by the Alfred Health infection prevention team.

### **Additional information**

**NTP Question 33: If you wish to include any additional information in your witness statement, please set it out below.**

Alfred Health - Nurse  
Manager

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Infection Prevention and Healthcare  
Epidemiology Unit Nurse Manager  
Alfred Health

DATED: 1 September 2020