

## **BOARD OF INQUIRY INTO THE COVID-19 HOTEL QUARANTINE PROGRAM**

### **SUPPLEMENTARY WITNESS STATEMENT OF PROFESSOR EUAN WALLACE AM**

**Name:** Professor Euan Wallace

**Address:** Level 3, 50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Vic, 3000

**Occupation:** CEO, Safer Care Victoria

**Date:** 7 September 2020

1. I make this statement supplementary to my statement dated 2 September 2020 (my **first statement**).
2. I am aware that solicitors assisting the Board of Inquiry have asked me two further questions:
  - (a) whether there are any notes of the meeting I had with Merrin Bamert referred to in paragraph 30 of my first statement; and
  - (b) whether I can provide dates of the changes articulated at 39 (a) – (e) of my first statement.
3. In relation to my meeting with Merrin Bamert on 1 May 2020, the meeting was via Microsoft Teams and I did not take any minutes or notes. The purpose of that meeting was to share and discuss the Escalation Points so that opportunities to address those were not delayed by waiting for the final review findings.
4. As detailed in paragraphs 30 and 31 of my first statement, Merrin Bamert and her team were already aware of the majority of the issues raised by the Escalation Points and had either already implemented improvements to address them or had improvements underway.
5. In paragraph 39 of my first statement, I state that I am aware of specific changes made to the hotel quarantine program as a result of issues and recommendations raised in the reports of Safer Care Victoria. A record of the discussions and actions regarding these improvements is found in the action log from the Operation Soteria working group.<sup>1</sup>
6. This working group provided a forum for day-to-day troubleshooting for passenger health and welfare functions of the Operation. The membership of group comprised DHHS

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<sup>1</sup> Action Log, DHS.0001.0002.0083.

representatives from Public Health Command, Compliance, Health and Wellbeing, and the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) of Op Soteria. The working group was attended by the State Controller (Health). In mid-April I was asked by the Deputy Secretary, RHPEM, to chair the working group.

7. With regard to the improvements I note in paragraph 39 of my first statement, a record of discussion and action in the working group action plan include:
  - (a) Improved entry screening and welfare/health screening processes – as discussed by the working group on 16 April 2020; 23 April 2020; 27 April 2020; 11 May 2020;
  - (b) PPE usage by nursing staff – no change to practice required;
  - (c) Care escalation pathways – as discussed by the working group on 17 April 2020; 27 April 2020;
  - (d) Clinical governance lead – as discussed by the working group on 24 April 2020; 5 May 2020; 28 May 2020; 22 June 2020;
  - (e) Addition of specialist mental health expertise – as discussed by the working group on 11 May 2020; 14 May 2020; 19 May 2020; 22 May 2020; 28 May 2020.
8. In paragraph 48 of my first statement I comment that the due date for implementation of improvements addressing the other recommendations from the two Safer Care Victoria reviews fell subsequent to my secondment to the Department. I can now provide a record of the implementation of those recommendations, as at 5 September 2020, as detailed in the MHQ Action Plan.<sup>2</sup>
9. I have also reviewed one of Safer Care Victoria's reports and prepared a version that removes what I regard as sensitive, personal information which should not be disclosed to the public, that I now attach.<sup>3</sup> That redacted version of the report includes SCV's recommendations and findings.

### **Role as State Health Coordinator**

10. The NTP-119 was directed to me in my capacity as the CEO of Safer Care Victoria and asked me questions relevant to that role. It may also be relevant to the Board's consideration that in late March 2020, the Secretary to the Department asked me to take on the role of State Health Co-ordinator for the COVID-19 pandemic response. As described in

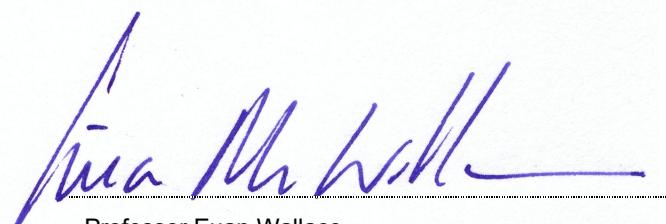
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<sup>2</sup> MHQ Action Plan, SCV.0001.0005.0001.

<sup>3</sup> Redacted Report 1, DHS.0001.0002.0058.

the State Health Emergency Response Plan<sup>4</sup>, the “State Health Coordinator reports to the State Controller and is responsible for coordinating DHHS’ emergency response activities across the health system (including hospitals, primary health and other acute services) at the state tier.”

**Signed** at Melbourne  
in the State of Victoria  
on 7 September 2020



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Euan Wallace". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underneath it.

Professor Euan Wallace

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<sup>4</sup> State Health Emergency Response Plan, Edition 4, DHS.0001.0027.0883.