

**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**

Name: Andrew Crisp  
Occupation: Emergency Management Commissioner  
Address: Emergency Management Victoria, 121 Exhibition Street, Melbourne VIC 3000  
Date: 14 August 2020

I, Andrew Crisp, Emergency Management Commissioner, say as follows:

1. I make this statement in my capacity as Emergency Management Commissioner in response to:
  - a. the questions asked of me by the Board of Inquiry into the COVID-19 Hotel Quarantine Program; and
  - b. in response to a Notice to Produce dated 29 July 2020 and numbered NTP-029.

2. This statement is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

**Question 1: What is your role and key accountabilities as Emergency Management Commissioner?**

3. I was appointed Emergency Management Commissioner on 8 August 2018 and commenced in the role on 13 August 2018.
4. As Emergency Management Commissioner, I am responsible for ensuring that the State's response to an emergency is coordinated, and that effective control arrangements are in place.
5. The role of the Emergency Management Commissioner is established under the Emergency Management Act 2013 (Vic) (the Act). Section 32 of the Act sets out the legislative functions of the role which include:
  - a. being responsible for the coordination of the activities of agencies having roles or responsibilities in relation to the response to an emergency (section 32(1)(a));
  - b. ensuring that control arrangements are in place during an emergency and that the relevant agencies act in accordance with the State Emergency Response Plan (section 32(1)(b));

- c. managing the State Control Centre on behalf of, and in collaboration with, all agencies that may use it for emergencies (section 32(1)(d));
  - d. ensuring that the Minister for Emergency Services is provided with timely and up to date information in relation to the response to major emergencies (section 32(1)(e));
  - e. being responsible for consequence management for a major emergency (section 32(1)(f)). Consequence management is described in section 45(1) of the Act as the coordination of agencies, including agencies who engage the skills and services of non-government organisations, which are responsible for managing or regulating services or infrastructure which is, or may be, affected by a major emergency; and
  - f. being responsible for the preparation of the State Emergency Response Plan (section 32(1)(mb)).
6. I am supported in the performance of my role by Emergency Management Victoria, being the central agency responsible for emergency management in Victoria and a body corporate established pursuant to Part 3 of the Act.
7. My primary accountability is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, as described in section 32(1)(e) of the Act.

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

8. My professional background and work history is set out in my resume, which is attached to this witness statement [DOJ.600.001.0001].

**Question 3: What was Emergency Management Victoria's role in coordinating pandemic planning and response activities (in general, and with respect to COVID-19)?**

9. Emergency Management Victoria's role in coordinating pandemic planning and response activities is to support me in the performance of my role as Emergency Management Commissioner, as set out below.
10. Victoria's emergency management arrangements are established under the Act and within the State Emergency Response Plan. Emergency response management in Victoria is based on the functions of coordination, control, command, consequence management and communications.
11. The COVID-19 pandemic is a Class 2 emergency under the Act. For a Class 2 emergency, the roles and responsibilities for emergency response management are as follows:
- a. Coordination: I am responsible for coordinating agencies and resources to ensure the effective response to and recovery from the emergency. During the response phase, I am responsible for ensuring that effective control arrangements have been established and are

maintained by the control agency (see below), that information is shared effectively, and that the necessary resources are accessed to support the response. I am also responsible for managing the State Control Centre on behalf of, and in collaboration with, all agencies that may be using it.

- b. Control: The State Emergency Response Plan [DOJ.600.001.0271] identifies the agency primarily responsible for responding to different types of emergencies (the control agency). For emergencies relating to human disease, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Health and Human Services is the control agency. Control arrangements where the Department of Health and Human Services is the control agency are described in the State Health Emergency Response Plan (a sub-plan of the State Emergency Response Plan) [DOJ.600.001.1026]. The officer in charge of the control agency (here, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services) is responsible for appointing a Class 2 State Controller (also referred to as the State Controller, or the State Controller – Health), who is responsible for managing and leading the operational response to the emergency. The control agency may be assisted by support agencies through the provision of essential services, personnel or material.
- c. Command: The control agency (here, the Department of Health and Human Services) is responsible for identifying its chain of command, and the commanders responsible for supervising its agency personnel.
- d. Consequence management: I am responsible for managing the consequences that flow from the emergency. This involves the coordination of the activities of agencies with a role in delivering services to the community, with the aim of minimising the adverse consequences of the emergency on the community.
- e. Communications: For a class 2 emergency such as the COVID-19 pandemic, I am responsible for coordinating public, stakeholder and government communications. In particular:
  - i. While the control agency is responsible for delivering warnings and advice about the emergency, I work with the control agency to make sure that such warnings and advice are issued in accordance with the Victoria Warning Protocol, and (through the Emergency Management Joint Public Information Committee) to ensure that the messages of all relevant agencies are considered in public communications. The Department of Health and Human Services website contains key authoritative information about the COVID-19 pandemic, and is supported via the VicEmergency channels (these include the VicEmergency website, VicEmergency app, hotline and social media channels).

- ii. I chair the State Emergency Management Team which seeks to promote situational awareness across relevant agencies and to identify and manage strategic risks and consequences. This ensures decision making before, during and after emergencies is well informed.
  - iii. I ensure the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is provided with timely and up-to-date information in the lead up to, and during, major emergencies.
- 12. Save as described in response to question 6 below, the role I have performed with respect to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic reflects the general allocation of responsibilities described above, and includes the following.
  - a. Overseeing the preparation of the State Emergency Response Plan which provides for the coordinated response to emergencies by all agencies having relevant roles or responsibilities. The State Emergency Response Plan was last updated in February 2020 by Emergency Management Victoria and was approved by the State Crisis and Resilience Council (which is described in response to question 4 below) on 5 March 2020. Emergency Management Victoria is leading reforms to Victoria's arrangements that apply to planning for emergencies in line with the *Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2018* (Vic), which passed Parliament on 9 August 2018. I will develop and issue a new state emergency management plan to replace the State Emergency Response Plan by 1 December 2020. Discussion on these reforms formed the basis of the forum with the Department of Health and Human Services referred to in question 7 below.
  - b. Working with the State Controller - Health (and later, the Deputy State Controllers) since their appointment by the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services on 2 February 2020 to ensure that effective control arrangements have been established and are maintained, including during formal meetings (such as meetings of the State Control Team, State Coordination Team and State Emergency Management Team) and regular informal briefings and discussions. I have also worked with the State Controller to prepare the COVID-19 specific State Operational Arrangements [DOJ.501.001.9324] and the State Strategic Operations Plan [DOJ.600.001.1497] (both of which are regularly updated). The State Operational Arrangements are to be read in conjunction with the State Health Emergency Response Plan, and aim to ensure the effective management of the response to the COVID-19 emergency. The State Strategic Operations Plan provides resourcing guidance to agencies for consideration in order to facilitate the State Operational Arrangements (COVID-19). It highlights potential risks to resourcing availability (for example cumulative fatigue, social distancing guidance and isolation/quarantining of workforce) for consideration across the COVID-19 response. Strategies for addressing resourcing risks are tracked and monitored in the State Strategic Risk Register. The State

Strategic Risk Register assigns a lead agency, supporting agencies and identifies any additional coordination mechanisms and strategies required to mitigate the risk.

- c. Activating the State Control Centre on 11 March 2020 for the COVID-19 pandemic (although the State Control Centre has been operational since October 2019 for major fires), at the request of the Department of Health and Human Services (as control agency), for a Class 2 pandemic emergency in accordance with the State Emergency Response Plan and the State Health Emergency Response Plan. Once activated, the State Control Centre coordinates the activities of agencies (approximately 18 in total) with responsibilities in relation to the pandemic response. The State Control Centre was activated at Tier 2 by the State Controller, in consultation with myself, reflecting the predicted level of resources required in the State Control Centre to support the response. It has been operational 24 hours a day since 2 April 2020 to provide a dedicated 24/7 intelligence capability. The State Control Centre facilitates access by the Department of Health and Human Services (and other relevant agencies) to well-practiced emergency management networks, a trained workforce and protocols for surge capacity. The State Control Centre also has well embedded systems for working across government agencies and contains functional units including public information and warnings, intelligence, relief and recovery, planning and resources. Allowing the control agency and support agencies to use the State Control Centre helps to ensure that Victoria's response to the emergency is coordinated.
- d. Meeting with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services on a regular basis to provide key updates on the operations and status of the COVID-19 response and to highlight any key issues of which the Minister ought to be aware. Ordinarily, I have a standing weekly operational and business meeting with the Minister. During the COVID-19 response, the Minister has scheduled an additional regular meeting to be briefed about COVID-19. The frequency of these meetings has increased depending on operational need. Since 4 July 2020, I have met with the Minister on an almost daily basis.
- e. Attending regular meetings of the State Control Team for COVID-19, the State Coordination Team, the State Crisis and Resilience Council and the State Emergency Management Team (for more detail regarding these, see response to question 4 below).
- f. Chairing a weekly meeting attended by senior emergency management personnel including the Chiefs of the Country Fire Authority, Fire Rescue Victoria (and previously the Metropolitan Fire Brigade), the Victorian State Emergency Service, Deputy Emergency Management Commissioners and Victoria Police. At these meetings, we discuss a range of emerging risks and issues.
- g. Endorsing the establishment of the Response Agency Taskforce that has senior representatives from all our police and emergency services. This group has met regularly

since March and focussed on monitoring a range of issues including implications of border closures, monitoring emergency services workforce and volunteer absenteeism as a result of COVID-19, support required for staff and volunteers, personal protective equipment requirements, contact tracing implications and service delivery including incident management and preparedness for concurrent emergencies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- h. Consulting with the Minister for Health and Human Services in connection with the declaration of a state of emergency (as explained in response to question 12).
- i. Providing advice to the Premier about the appropriateness of declaring a state of disaster (as explained in response to question 13).
- j. Requesting resources and support from the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to support the work of the State Control Centre, support the public health response (including contact tracing data management and analysis), provide support to Ambulance Victoria and undertake compliance checking with Victoria Police at vehicle check points. I am responsible for submitting Victoria's requests for resources to the Commonwealth for class 2 emergencies. I do so by submitting a Request for Assistance form to Emergency Management Australia.
- k. Appointing a State Consequence Manager to lead the State Control Centre's strategic planning work (in conjunction with the State Emergency Management Team). This was to ensure that agencies identify risks and coordinate proactive mitigation strategies to minimise the social and economic consequences of the emergency (including on the community, businesses, agencies and government).
- l. Considering risk mitigation strategies, such as the risk of concurrent Class 1 and 2 emergencies and preparing operational plans to mitigate the consequences of such concurrent emergencies.
- m. Working with the State Strategic Intelligence Team (which was activated within the State Control Centre), the Joint Intelligence Unit – Outbreaks and the Joint Intelligence and Planning Group, which gather information, intelligence and data from various sources and share it across the emergency management system to improve decision-making and improve risk-mitigation activities.

**Question 4: As at 16 March 2020 what plans, activities and structures were in place in Victoria to respond to an infectious diseases pandemic?**

13. I am aware of the following plans that were in place as at 16 March 2020 and that are relevant to responding to an infectious diseases pandemic.

- a. State Emergency Response Plan (February 2020) – this plan outlines the Victorian arrangements for the coordinated response to emergencies by all agencies with a role or responsibility in relation to emergency response, as listed in Part 7 of the Emergency Management Manual Victoria [DOJ.600.001.0271].
  - b. State Health Emergency Response Plan (Edition 4) (October 2017) – this is a sub-plan to the State Emergency Response Plan, and provides an overview of the arrangements for the management of health emergencies in Victoria [DOJ.600.001.1026].
  - c. Victorian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza (October 2014) – this plan was prepared by the (then) Department of Health and provides a framework for government and the health sector to minimise transmissibility, morbidity and mortality associated with an influenza pandemic and to manage the impact of a pandemic on the community and the health system [DOJ.600.001.0325].
  - d. Victorian Action Plan for Influenza Pandemic (August 2015) – this plan sets out Victoria’s strategic approach to reduce the social and economic impacts and consequences of pandemic influenza on communities [DOJ.600.001.0446].
  - e. COVID-19 Pandemic Plan for the Victorian Health Sector (10 March 2020) – this plan was prepared by the Department of Health and Human Services as a guide for preparing and responding to COVID-19 for Victoria’s health sector [DOJ.600.001.0239].
  - f. Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza (August 2019) – this plan was prepared by the Commonwealth Department of Health, and comprises the chapters of the Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza, the Operational Plan and documents that provide additional detail to support decision making or operations [DOJ.600.001.1115].
14. I am aware of the following activities and structures that were in place as at 16 March 2020 and that are relevant to responding to an infectious diseases pandemic.
- a. State Control Team: The State Control Team advises and recommends strategic operational actions to the State Controller on the response to the emergency, and oversees the implementation of operational actions of emergency management agencies. The State Control Team has met daily or every second day since March 2020 and is chaired by the State Controller. Until 27 July 2020, its members have been the Emergency Management Commissioner, Deputy Emergency Management Commissioner(s), State Controller – Health, Chief Health Officer, Public Health Commander, State Health Coordinator, State Health Commander, State Response Controller, Deputy State Controllers (for relevant ongoing operations such as Operation Soteria), Victoria Police (Senior Police Liaison Officer and Deputy State Commander), a representative of the Combined Agency

Operations Group, a representative of the Australian Defence Force, the State Consequence Manager, State Relief and Recovery Manager, State Communication Manager, State Intelligence Manager, the Emergency Management Commissioner's Executive Officer and the State Control Centre Room Manager. Observers include representatives of the Department of Premier and Cabinet and of the Inspector General for Emergency Management. Since 27 July 2020, its members have been all Secretaries, the Chief Commissioner of Police, the Chief Health Officer and me (see my response to question 6 below).

- b. State Emergency Management Team: The State Emergency Management Team is chaired by me and is a whole-of-sector forum that coordinates the activities of agencies with roles and responsibilities in emergency management. It plays a significant role in the preparation for, and consequence management of, an emergency, and supports the State Control Team. It meets as often as is operationally required, which is anywhere from two to five times per month. Additionally, departments and agencies engage with the team primarily through regular whole of Victorian government strategic intelligence and planning meetings.
- c. State Crisis and Resilience Council: The State Crisis and Resilience Council is responsible for providing advice to the Minister for Emergency Services, other relevant ministers and the Security and Emergency Management Committee of Cabinet on whole-of-government emergency management policy and strategy, its implementation and any complex or emerging issues. It is not responsible for operational or tactical decisions during an emergency. It is chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Its members are the Secretaries of each Government department, the Chief Commissioner of Police, the Chief Executive of Emergency Management Victoria and me. The Inspector General of Emergency Management attends as an observer, as does the Chief Executive of the Municipal Association of Victoria (as a representative of local government).
- d. Security and Emergency Management Committee of Cabinet: This committee is the Victorian Government's ministerial decision making body during a large-scale emergency, and is advised by the State Crisis and Resilience Council. The Security and Emergency Management Committee of Cabinet is chaired by the Premier and comprises Ministers with security and emergency management responsibilities. It provides direction and oversees the implementation of policies, strategies and programs affecting security, critical infrastructure resilience and emergency management. It also oversees prevention, preparedness, response and recovery for major emergencies requiring whole of government coordination. The Chief Commissioner of Police and I attend meetings in an advisory capacity.
- e. State Coordination Team: The State Coordination Team supports me with respect to my coordination functions and responsibilities for this emergency. In addition to myself, its



members include all the operation specific Deputy State Controllers, the State Health Coordinator, the State Health Commander, State Consequence Manager, State Communications Manager, CAOG Manager, State Relief and Recovery Manager, State Intelligence Manager, Deputy State Police Commander, and the State Response Controller (Class 1). I chair the meetings of this team, or my deputy State Coordinator. It meets daily after State Control Team meetings.

- f. State Control Centre: The State Control Centre is a facility, managed by me, that has staff and systems in place to support me, the State Response Controller, Class 2 State Controllers, responder agency commanders and state tier functions (such as the State Communications Manager, the State Intelligence Manager and the State Consequence Manager).
- g. Emergency Management Joint Public Information Committee: This is a state committee that supports operational public information processes by coordinating whole of government emergency management communications and community engagement.

**Question 5: As at 16 March 2020 what plans, documents or arrangements existed for the quarantining or isolation of international travellers or returning residents in the event of an infectious diseases pandemic?**

- 15. There is reference to the quarantining or isolation of international travellers or returning residents in the event of an infectious diseases pandemic in the following documents.
  - a. Emergency Management Manual Victoria at pp. 2-5, 8-23 [DOJ.600.001.0501].
  - b. COVID-19 Pandemic Plan for the Victorian Health Sector (10 March 2020) at pp.10, 28 [DOJ.600.001.0239].
  - c. Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza (August 2019), which addresses border measures (being measures that can be taken at airports and seaports to delay the entry or minimise the spread of illness to or from affected countries) (for example, at pages 125-129) [DOJ.600.001.1115].

**Question 6: To what extent was the response to the COVID-19 pandemic from 16 March 2020 onwards consistent with any such existing arrangements for an infectious diseases pandemic?**

- 16. For the most part, the response to the COVID-19 pandemic from 16 March 2020 has been consistent with the existing emergency response arrangements for an infectious diseases pandemic. I am aware of the following key departures from those arrangements.
  - a. On 3 April 2020, the Premier established a new governance structure to coordinate the Government's response and decisions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, which included

the Crisis Council of Cabinet and the Missions Coordination Committee. Since its establishment on 3 April 2020, the Crisis Council of Cabinet has replaced the Security and Emergency Management Committee of Cabinet for the COVID-19 response. I am ordinarily an observer at the Security and Emergency Management Committee of Cabinet, but I am not a member or observer of the Crisis Council of Cabinet or the Missions Coordination Committee. However, I did attend a Missions Coordination Committee meeting on one occasion on 1 May 2020 to give a presentation.

- b. Because of the significant demands on him in responding to the public health emergency, the Chief Health Officer has not performed the role of State Controller. This represents a departure from the State Health Emergency Response Plan. Instead, the role of State Controller has been filled on a rostered, rotating basis by the following senior personnel :
  - i. 2 February to 3 July 2020: Jason Helps and Andrea Spiteri (Department of Health and Human Services).
  - ii. 4 July to 27 July 2020: Debra Abbott (Deputy Commissioner, Emergency Management Victoria), Chris Hardman (Chief Fire Officer, Forest Fire Management Victoria) and Tim Wiebusch (Chief Officer Operations, Victoria State Emergency Service).
  - iii. 27 July 2020 onwards: Kym Peake (Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services).
- c. Between 28 March 2020 to 1 May 2020, the role of Deputy State Controller – Operation Soteria was filled by Chris Eagle and Scott Falconer who work in the Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning (as opposed to the control agency). Mr Eagle and Mr Falconer were appointed to the role based on their emergency management expertise. Following Mr Eagle and Mr Falconer's time in the role, the Department of Health and Human Services appointed a Public Health Commander to Operation Soteria for a period of time until Rowena Hansen was seconded from the Department of Justice and Community Safety to the Department of Health and Human Services to perform the Deputy State Controller (Soteria) role.
- d. Until recently, the State Controller – Health has been the sole State Controller with respect to the emergency. On 27 July 2020, in accordance with a recommendation made by me to the Crisis Council of Cabinet, the Crisis Council of Cabinet approved enhanced control and coordination arrangements making the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services the State Controller - Health. Other Secretaries may be appointed as State Controllers for departmental specific operations.
- e. From 27 July 2020, also in accordance with a recommendation made by me to the Crisis Council of Cabinet, the State Control Team was reconfigured to consist of all Secretaries,

the Chief Commissioner of Police, the Chief Health Officer and me. I chair meetings of the State Control Team. What was previously the State Control Team has been reconfigured to become the State Coordination Team.

**Question 7: When were preparedness and response exercises for an infectious diseases pandemic most recently undertaken in Victoria?**

17. I am aware of the following recent preparedness and response exercises for an infectious diseases pandemic. Emergency Management Victoria coordinates critical infrastructure resilience and encourages owners and operators of Victoria's most critical infrastructure to practice and test their emergency management plans. Several of these exercises are risk management activities undertaken in line with Part 7A of the Act.
- a. All Sectors Resilience Network Forum, 24 May 2018 – The All Sectors Resilience Network Forum is an annual forum that brings together owners and operators of critical infrastructure to discuss risks, lessons learnt, good practice and improvement opportunities. At this particular forum, over 100 participants took part in a pandemic influenza desktop exercise discussion. The forum was organised by Emergency Management Victoria and jointly conducted with Southern Cross Station. Participants in the exercise included owners and operators of critical infrastructure, government departments and emergency services. The exercise discussion asked critical infrastructure owners and operators to reflect on the effectiveness of their existing planning and preparedness for an infectious diseases pandemic, their pandemic plans, and their understanding of interdependencies between organisations in the event of such an emergency. This took place before my appointment as Emergency Management Commissioner.
  - b. Exercise Alchemy, 8 August 2018 – Exercise Alchemy was Victoria's first Class 2 emergency public information exercise. It was developed in partnership between Emergency Management Victoria, the (then) Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, and the Department of Health and Human Services. It focused on an avian flu outbreak and pandemic, with the aim to test the State's strategic communications processes and agency roles, responsibilities and operational arrangements. Participants included Emergency Management Victoria, the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, and the Department of Health and Human Services. A pandemic emergency was selected as it offered the relevant complexity and multi-agency involvement as well as a high demand for public information. This took place before my appointment as Emergency Management Commissioner.
  - c. Exercise Petunia, October 2018 – As a follow on from the All Sectors Resilience Network Forum held in May 2018, members of the transport, health, communications and government sectors came together to participate in a multi-sector discussion exercise on

the impact of a major pandemic. This discussion exercise was organised under the Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy as a multi-sector resilience improvement activity. It was co-led by the transport, communications, health and government critical infrastructure sectors. Emergency Management Victoria was a contributor to the organising committee developed specifically for this discussion exercise. I understand that the 80 participants were asked to consider cross-sector impacts and vulnerabilities, and the potential impact of these within their organisations. The Chief Health Officer attended and gave an opening address about the preparedness arrangements in Victoria for a pandemic. I was not involved in this exercise.

- d. Exercise Oscar, 24 October 2018 – the (then) Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources conducted an emergency preparedness activity based on a pandemic scenario.
- e. Emergency Management Executive Forum, 9 August 2019 – This forum aimed to create a greater understanding of the role of the Department of Health and Human Services in emergency management, and to discuss the changes to be implemented by the *Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018 (Vic)*. These reforms are described at paragraph 12(a) above. It was attended by me, the Deputy Emergency Management Commissioner, the Chief Health Officer, two Deputy Chief Health Officers, the Deputy Secretary Regulation, Health Protection and Emergency Management, and representatives of the Department of Health and Human Services.
- f. Exercise Teapot, 10 September 2019 – Exercise Teapot was an exercise of the State Health Emergency Response Plan, Edition 4. It aimed to build a greater understanding of the State Health Emergency Response Plan in the context of a potential communicable disease outbreak in a regional setting. The exercise was attended by 113 participants from over 16 agencies. It included a panel of senior representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services, including the Chief Health Officer and representatives from regional health networks. I was not involved in this exercise.
- g. Facilitated discussion exercise, COVID-19, 4 March 2020 – This transport sector workshop considered readiness for COVID-19, and the impacts and key issues of the emerging emergency. Invitees included transport owners and operators, representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services, and Ambulance Victoria. I was not involved in this exercise.
- h. Exercise Contact, 28 April 2020 – This was a discussion exercise led by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning for Water Sector Resilience Network members on actions to be undertaken in the event employees working at a water corporation were infected by COVID-19. The exercise involved over 70 participants and included 20 water

sector businesses together with observers from Emergency Management Victoria and the Department of Health and Human Services. I was not involved in this exercise.

18. The State Strategic Planning Cell of the State Control Centre has conducted several contingency exercises in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the following.
- a. Regional Outbreak Joint Operational Planning Desktop Exercise, Aged Care, April 2020 – This was a desktop exercise arranged by the State Consequence Manager with the aim of ensuring that health protection and health emergency response is effectively controlled, coordinated and resourced for a COVID-19 outbreak in an aged care facility in regional Victoria. It was delivered on 28 April 2020 using the Microsoft Teams platform. I was not involved in this exercise.
  - b. Regional Discussion Exercise Concept COVID-19, 12 May 2020 – This was a desktop exercise arranged by the State Consequence Manager at which participants were given the opportunity to consider the impact of a localised event in a regional community, applying the current state operational arrangements for the COVID-19 pandemic, and provide assurance that those arrangements will result in effective coordination of control and support agencies. Participants were from regional control teams, regional coordination teams, the Australian Defence Force, and Emergency Management Victoria. It was delivered on 19 May 2020 using the Microsoft Teams platform. I was not involved in this exercise.
  - c. Exercise Deluge, 26 May 2020 – This exercise sought to test the state and regional arrangements for the management of a class 1 emergency (such as a major fire) in a COVID-19 environment, identifying key considerations, issues and risks to inform readiness planning including capacity, State control and coordination arrangements, escalation points and, community relief and information and warning implications. It was arranged by the State Consequence Manager. Participants included representatives from the Victorian State Emergency Service, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Australian Defence Force together with municipal representatives. I was not involved in this exercise.
  - d. Operation Charon, June 2020 – This planning exercise aimed to ensure arrangements were in place to successfully, professionally and compassionately manage mortuary requirements through the COVID-19 response, in the event the pandemic threatens to breach the capacity threshold of the existing mortuary system. It resulted in the preparation of the COVID-19 State Mortuary Arrangements.

**Question 8: To what extent did the possibility of quarantining international travellers and returning residents feature in those exercises?**

19. I did not attend any of the exercises addressed at question 7, except for the Emergency Management Executive Forum addressed at paragraph 17(e). As best as I can recall, there was no discussion about the quarantining of international travellers and returning residents at the Emergency Management Executive Forum.

**Question 9: How were Victoria's pandemic planning and response arrangements revised in light of those exercises, if at all?**

20. I am aware that industry participants engaged in the exercises referred to in response to question 7 above have amended their internal policies and practices as a consequence of lessons learnt during the exercises. Victoria's Critical Infrastructure All Sectors Resilience Report 2020 provides an overview of Victoria's eight critical infrastructure sectors, and details the measures undertaken by both industry and government to enhance the resilience of infrastructure and assets important to the continuity of Victoria's essential services. Owners or operators of critical infrastructure assessed as 'vital' must undertake emergency risk planning, conduct an audit of their emergency risk management processes, undertake an exercise and submit a statement of assurance to the relevant Minister providing assurance that their emergency risk management processes and actions are robust. Sectors that do not contain 'vital' critical infrastructure participate on a voluntary basis.
21. The Assurance and Learning Unit in the State Control Centre supports the Emergency Management Commissioner, State Controller and State Relief and Recovery Manager in maintaining an overview of state-wide assurance and learning activities that are undertaken in relation to emergency events, provides strategic advice to decision-makers and identifies emerging opportunities for capturing and sharing lessons. Emergency Management Victoria is committed to continually reviewing and improving its plans and arrangements, including through its process of monitoring and review through the Assurance and Learning Framework (also referred to as the Lessons Management Framework) [DOJ.600.001.1559].
22. I am aware that action was initiated by the State Controller following Exercise Deluge at both the regional and state level to improve the State's ability to manage a concurrent class 1 emergency during the COVID-19 pandemic (noting, in particular, the constrained personnel and remote operating environments). Relevant observations have been shared with the Response Agency Taskforce to inform readiness planning and work is underway for the preparation of guidance on the establishment of Incident Management Teams in COVID-19 environments. Lessons learnt and observations made during Exercise Deluge will also inform Assurance and Learnings products such as 'Before Action Reports' to be used by agencies before dealing with concurrent emergencies during COVID-19.

**Question 10: Under arrangements in the Emergency Management Manual Victoria, which agency would have the function of enforcing detention orders?**

23. Detention orders, including the function of enforcing such orders, are not addressed in the Emergency Management Manual Victoria.

**Question 11: In light of previous pandemic experiences, and with other jurisdictions imposing quarantine arrangements, did you and/or Emergency Management Victoria foresee that mandatory quarantine arrangements for international travellers or returning residents would be needed? If so, state when that occurred and what steps were taken to plan for it.**

24. As at 27 March 2020, being the date on which the Prime Minister announced that travellers would be required to attend mandatory quarantine, I did not foresee that mandatory quarantine arrangements for international travellers or returning residents would be needed. Prior to the decision to impose mandatory detention on returning travellers, returning travellers were required to self-isolate in their own home.

**Declaration of State of Emergency**

**Question 12: Were you consulted in advance about the declaration of a state of emergency on 16 March 2020? If so, what if any view did you express?**

25. By letter dated 15 March 2020, the Minister for Health consulted me about declaring a state of emergency under section 198 of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Vic). The Minister's letter attached an advice from the Chief Health Officer to the Minister for Health relating to the declaration of a state of emergency [DOJ.600.001.0055, DOJ.600.001.0011].
26. By letter dated 15 March 2020, I advised the Minister for Health that I supported the declaration of a state of emergency on the basis proposed in the Minister's letter. In summary, this was due to the serious risk of public health, based on the advice of the Chief Health Officer that the Minister had provided to me, and the anticipated impact and consequences that may develop [DOJ.600.001.0059].

**Question 13: Were you party to any discussion with any other agency regarding alternatives to the declaration of a state of emergency under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008? If so, what was that discussion?**

27. On 22 March 2020, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and I recommended to the Premier that the Premier declare a state of disaster. I made this recommendation on the basis that, on the then current available information, I was of the view that the COVID-19 pandemic was an emergency which constituted a significant and widespread danger to life and property in Victoria, and that the emergency met the threshold for declaring a state of disaster under the Act [DOJ.600.001.1093].
28. By letter dated 2 April 2020, the Premier informed me that he had formed the view that the powers available under the state of emergency were sufficient to support the government's response to the pandemic and that he had decided not to declare a state of disaster at that time [DOJ.600.001.1491].
29. I did not have any direct discussions with the Premier in relation to the state of disaster. I had direct conversations with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services regarding the declaration of a state of disaster .

30. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services and I agreed to continue to consider whether to recommend that a state of disaster be declared in the future as the emergency evolved. On 2 August 2020, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and I again recommended to the Premier that the Premier declare a state of disaster [DOJ.600.001.1578].
31. The Premier declared a state of disaster on 2 August 2020.

**Mandatory Quarantine for International Travellers**

**Question 14: The National Cabinet announced mandatory quarantine measures on 26 March 2020, to commence at 11:59pm on 28 March 2020.**

**(a) When and how did you learn that the Victorian Hotel Quarantine Program was to be established?**

**(b) At the time you learned of it, what did you understand to be the role you and Emergency Management Victoria would play in its operation?**

32. I note that this question refers to the announcement of mandatory quarantine measures on 26 March 2020. The Prime Minister made this announcement on 27 March 2020, and I learned that the Victorian Hotel Quarantine Program was to be established on hearing this announcement.
33. At the time I learned that the Victorian Hotel Quarantine Program was to be established, I understood that the role I would play in relation to the operation of program was as described in response to question 3 above, namely ensuring the coordination of the relevant agencies and resources, and ensuring that effective control arrangements had been established and were maintained by the control agency.

**Operation Soteria**

**Question 15: When did discussions for the plan which became known as Operation Soteria first commence?**

34. Discussions about the plan which became known as Operation Soteria commenced almost immediately upon hearing the Prime Minister's announcement on 27 March 2020. I recall that, soon after hearing the announcement, I spoke to the State Controller and the State Consequence Manager about the need to put together a draft Operation Plan, sitting as one element of the overall response, for discussion, and then to bring together the relevant agencies to discuss that draft Operation Plan.
35. The first draft Operation Plan (version 0.1) was released for review and comment on 27 March 2020 to the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Department of Transport, the Australian Defence Force and Victoria Police. It was released following a teleconference at 4.30pm on 27 March involving representatives from those agencies, to reflect the discussion during that teleconference [DOJ.600.001.1573].



36. During the day on 28 March 2020, more teleconferences took place, including a teleconference involving the Melbourne Airport Crisis Management Team and a 10am teleconference involving the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Department of Transport, the Australian Defence Force, Victoria Police and Emergency Management Victoria. I chaired the 10am teleconference.
37. The second draft Operation Plan (version 0.2) was released on 28 March 2020 at approximately 6.15pm. It was discussed at the Operation Soteria Coordination meeting held at 6.15pm that evening and that I chaired. That meeting was attended by me and the State Controller, together with representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Department of Transport, the Australian Federal Police, Victoria Police, and the Australian Defence Force [DOJ.502.003.1752].
38. A subsequent version of the Operation Plan (version 1.0) was prepared following the Operation Soteria Coordination meeting on 28 March 2020 at approximately 8pm [DOJ.504.010.6875].
39. Two further subsequent versions of the Operation Plan were prepared:
  - a. version 1.1 on 29 March 2020 [DOJ.504.010.6787]; and
  - b. version 2.0 on 26 April 2020 [DOJ.501.001.9224].

**Question 16: When did Operation Soteria first become operational?**

40. Operation Soteria became operational at 11:59pm on 28 March 2020.

**Question 17: What if any steps were taken to implement plans for the mandatory quarantining of international travellers or returning residents in Victoria prior to Operation Soteria first becoming operational?**

41. An extraordinary amount of work was done in a very short time frame to implement plans for the mandatory quarantining of international travellers or returning residents in Victoria prior to Operation Soteria first becoming operational.
42. The steps that were taken to implement plans for the mandatory quarantining of international travellers or returning residents in Victoria prior to Operation Soteria first becoming operational are, for the most part, set out in versions of the Operation Plan referred to in response to question 15 above. Those steps included the following.
  - a. Establishing an Operation Soteria Incident Management team, which included me and the State Controller, together with representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, the Department of Premier and

Cabinet, the Department of Transport, the Australian Federal Police, Victoria Police, and the Australian Defence Force;

- b. Establishment of the phases of the operation, and allocation of responsibility for each phase to different agencies;
- c. Working with the Australian Federal Police and Border Force regarding airside operations, including how passengers would be provided with information about the quarantine process, the collection of entry data, the marshalling of passengers in a designated secure area for health screening, and transport arrangements;
- d. Planning and preparing for health screening of passengers and other wellbeing services (including psycho-social support) on arrival;
- e. Planning for the provision of personal protective equipment to passengers on arrival;
- f. Preparation of passenger arrival packs;
- g. Contracting transport, private security, accommodation, food and laundry providers;
- h. Preparation for the establishment and coordination of reception parties at hotel accommodation (including initial health screenings, identification of passengers with complex needs, provision of psycho-social first aid, access to nursing support for emerging health needs, regular welfare calls to quarantined passengers);
- i. Gathering information about incoming flights (arrival schedules and manifests);
- j. Preparation of a communications plan and developing and distributing information in accordance with that plan; and
- k. Conducting a dry run of the plan at Melbourne Airport.

**Question 18: Were you consulted or otherwise party to discussions about the potential use of private security companies as part of the Hotel Quarantine Program? If so, please state:**

**(a) when those discussions occurred**

**(b) what view if any did you express as to the suitability of such an arrangement**

**(c) what if any alternatives to the use of private security companies were considered**

**(d) why any such alternatives were not chosen.**

43. Prior to the teleconference referred to at paragraph 46 below, I was informed that the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions had been allocated responsibility by the Department of Premier and Cabinet for

- sourcing accommodation and private security contracts for what became Operation Soteria. I was not consulted in relation to this allocation of responsibility and I am not aware of the circumstances in which the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions was allocated this responsibility.
44. This allocation of responsibility was made before Operation Soteria sat formally within the State emergency management arrangements and any meetings had taken place in the State Control Centre.
45. At around the time of, or during, the teleconference referred to at paragraph 46 below, I received a phone call from the Secretary of the Department of Justice and Community Safety (Rebecca Falkingham), who told me that the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions had been given the lead by the Department of Premier and Cabinet on establishing hotel quarantine but that she considered it should be an operation that sat within the State emergency management arrangements. I agreed with that position and that the Department of Health and Human Services should be the control agency supported by other agencies as required.
46. Following this discussion, I attended a planning teleconference within the State Control Centre at 4:30pm on 27 March 2020 (referred to at paragraph 35 above). During this teleconference:
- a. a representative of Victoria Police (Assistant Commissioner Mick Granger) confirmed that it was the preference of Victoria Police that private security be the first line of security at the accommodation, and that Victoria Police respond as required; and
  - b. the representative of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (Director Claire Febey) confirmed that the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions:
    - i. had been allocated responsibility for contracting private security; and
    - ii. had arranged some hotels that were available on standby and confirmed that Skybus could mobilise an appropriate transport service as needed.
47. It was my understanding at this meeting that the decision to use private security companies, and the allocation of responsibility for engaging them, had already been made, prior to this meeting.
48. I am not aware of whether any alternatives to the use of private security companies were considered and, if so, why any such alternatives were not chosen.
49. As described at paragraph 35 above, a first draft of the Operation Soteria Operation Plan was prepared following this teleconference as the work product from the teleconference, with the purpose of clarifying departmental responsibilities in relation to Operation Soteria. This first draft of the Operation Plan recorded that the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions was responsible for managing private security contracts to enforce hotel quarantine and that Victoria Police would provide a security reserve force to support private security if required [DOJ.600.001.1573]. I was concerned to ensure that there was clarity as to departmental

responsibilities in relation to Operation Soteria so as to satisfy myself that that effective coordination and control arrangements were in place, and this Operation Plan provided that clarity.

50. I had a telephone meeting on 28 March 2020 with the Secretaries of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and the Department of Justice and Community Safety. During this meeting, I repeated my view that the operation should sit within the State emergency management arrangements with the Department of Health and Human Services as the control agency. I understood during that meeting that the Secretaries agreed with my view.

**Question 19: At any stage [stating when] did you become aware of information or allegations that private security companies engaged in the Hotel Quarantine Program were not performing satisfactorily?**

51. Yes, I became aware in late March of information or allegations that private security companies engaged in the Hotel Quarantine Program were not performing satisfactorily. I became aware of these issues and allegations during meetings of the State Control Team, during meetings of the Operation Soteria Coordination team, and during my ongoing discussions with the State Controllers and Deputy State Controllers.
52. I note in particular:
- a. During the meeting of the Operation Soteria Coordination team on 30 March 2020:
    - i. the representative from the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (Claire Febey) advised that there were issues with private security; and
    - ii. the representative from Victoria Police (either Teresa Fitzgerald or Jamie Templeton) advised that there were challenges with ongoing security [DOJ.501.001.8307].
  - b. During the meeting of the Operation Soteria Coordination team on 4 April 2020, it was noted that there had been reports that the security staff at the hotels were not following good social distancing practices and that a few breaches involving physical distancing and infection control practices had been reported. The State Controller – Health (Jason Helps) agreed to prepare information around operational health and safety and recommendations around social distancing measures and circulate once completed [DOJ.501.001.8302].
  - c. During the meeting of the Operation Soteria Coordination team on 18 April 2020, the representative from Victoria Police (Richard Patterson) noted that some issues had been identified the previous evening around the Novotel South Wharf and the Pan Pacific hotel with twenty travellers in isolation reported to be freely moving around with the general public [DOJ.501.001.8352]. I did not attend this meeting, but was sent a copy of the meeting

minutes on 19 April 2020 [DOJ.502.012.6646]. Although I did not attend this meeting, I understand from the meeting minutes that at the next meeting of the Operation Soteria Coordination team on 19 April 2020, it was clarified that the previous day's report regarding quarantined people being out exercising in public in large numbers continued to be investigated, but follow-up had revealed that this was not the case and that there may have been some confusion with other hotel guests [DOJ.501.001.8356].

- d. During the meeting of the State Control Team on 29 May 2020, the State Controller – Health (Jason Helps) said that there was a focus on recruiting to positions for a more sustainable approach to hotel quarantine [DOJ.501.001.8781].
- e. During the State Health Incident Management Team meeting on 28 May 2020, the State Health Coordination delegate said that the cluster at the Rydges hotel had identified the need for significant improvement in infectious disease control at hotels [DOJ.500.001.1197]. I did not attend this meeting, but was subsequently sent a copy of the meeting minutes [DOJ.500.001.1195].
- f. During the meeting of the State Control Team on 22 June 2020, the Chief Health Officer's delegate said that a security guard at the Stamford Hotel had turned up to work with symptoms [DOJ.501.001.8653].
- g. In a paper dated 24 June 2020 prepared by the Department of Health and Human Services in relation to Operation Soteria, it was stated that compliance, particularly from sections of the security staff, has been ad hoc, with incidents of noncompliance with infection prevention control, physical distancing and other Chief Health Officer directions resulting in outbreaks in hotel quarantine [DOJ.502.015.4125].
- h. I also became aware towards the end of June 2020 that security guards had been mingling with families who were in quarantine, had not worn appropriate personal protective equipment, had shared cigarettes, and had carpooled [DOJ.501.001.4279].

**Question 20: If 'yes' to the previous question:**

**(a) state the substance of that information or those allegations; and**

**(b) what steps you or Emergency Management Victoria took, and when, in response to such information or allegations?**

- 53. The substance of the information or allegations was as described in response to question 19 above.
- 54. I do not have a specific recollection of the meetings referred to in response to question 19 above, or of any particular discussion with the State Controllers and Deputy State Controllers. I can say, however, that I had regular and ongoing discussions with the State Controller and Deputy State Controllers, including about the

information or allegations described in response to question 19 above. Those discussions included both regular proactive briefings from the State Controller and Deputy State Controllers, and me asking questions of the State Controller and Deputy State Controllers. Through those discussions, I reached a level of satisfaction that those with operational responsibility and control were making the appropriate updates to policies and procedures to address the issues that had been identified, and that the necessary resources were available to them (or that steps were being taken to ensure the necessary resources were available, including by sourcing resources from other government departments).

**Question 21: Are you aware of an instruction or decision at some point to cease using private security contractors?**

55. I am aware that in late June 2020, alternatives to private security were considered including Victoria Police, and Victoria Police Protective Service Officers. Finally, Corrections Victoria was asked to provide security for Operation Soteria, but am not aware of any formal instruction or decision that private security should cease to be used. I am aware that the step in of Corrections Victoria to Operation Soteria commenced on approximately 2 July 2020 and was completed by 11 July 2020.

**Questions 22: If so, from which person or body did that instruction come and when did that occur?**

56. I refer to my answer to question 21 above.

**Question 23: Please state any reason you aware of for ceasing to use private security contractors?**

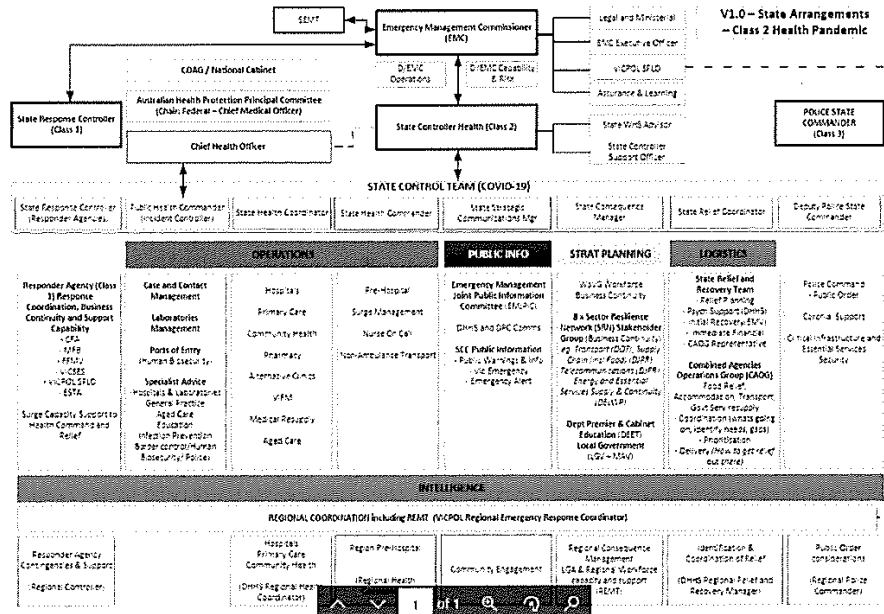
57. It is my understanding that there was a preference for Corrections Victoria to provide security (rather than private security contractors) due to the issues that had arisen in connection with the use of private security contractors, including those identified in response to question 19 above.

**Question 24: Please describe any changes of significance to the command structure of Operation Soteria from its commencement to the date of this statement, stating why any such changes were made.**

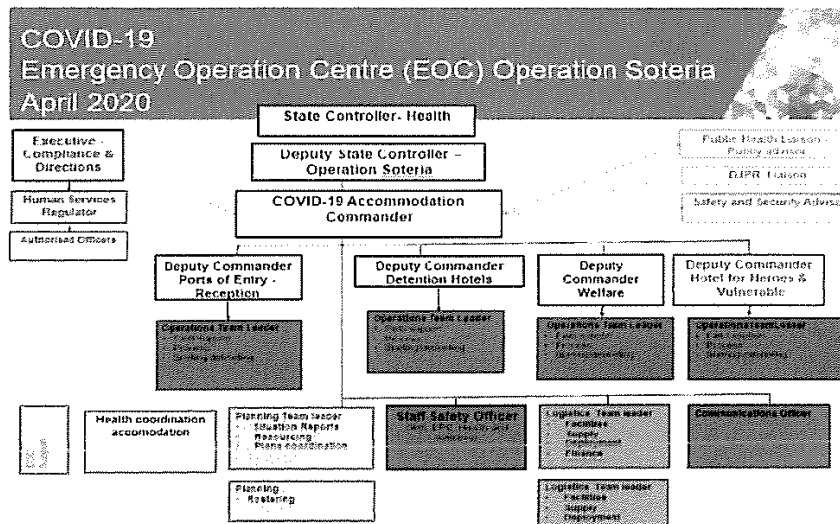
58. From 28 March 2020 to mid-April 2020:
- a. The structure in place for Operation Soteria was as set out below.

Function	Lead agency	Preliminary Stage	Stage 1: Receive passengers at point of entry	Stage 2: Move passengers from point of entry to accommodation	Stage 3: Accommodate passengers for 14 days	Stage 4: Release of passengers from accommodation
Command and Control	SCC	Queue and trigger DHHS as required	Monitoring the task and coordinate actions	Monitoring the task and coordinate actions	Monitoring the task and coordinate actions	Monitoring the task and coordinate actions
	DHHS	Plan/organise	Operational command	Operational command	Operational command	Operational command
Process	Australian Border Force/ Australian Federal Police	Preparation	Receive and process passengers (airside). Handover from ABF → AFP			
Process	DJPR	Preparation	Receive and process (stateside) (agreed transfer point 1 between ABF and DJPR)	Transfer of responsibility from DJPR to DoT	Assist DHHS	Assist DHHS
Transport	DoT	Organisation of transport for stage 2	Position buses at the point of entry, ready for stage 2	Receiving transfer of responsibility from DJPR. Executive move of passengers from point of entry to accommodation	Transfer of responsibility to DHHS	Prepared to provide transport solutions for passengers to their home/intended residence while in Victoria
Accommodation	DHHS	Organisation of transport for stage 3	Confirm readiness of accommodation, ready for stage 3	Receive travellers at accommodation	Receiving responsibility from DoT Manage, monitor and respond to passengers at accommodation	Manage release of passengers →
Strategic Messaging	DPC	Conduct messaging to: • passengers • any persons intending to receive passengers • general public • media		Monitoring adverse media/public reaction (external stakeholders)		
Security	VicPol	Prepare for response, contain		Support containment and respond as needed		
Health and Wellbeing	DHHS	Prepare for support			Supporting	

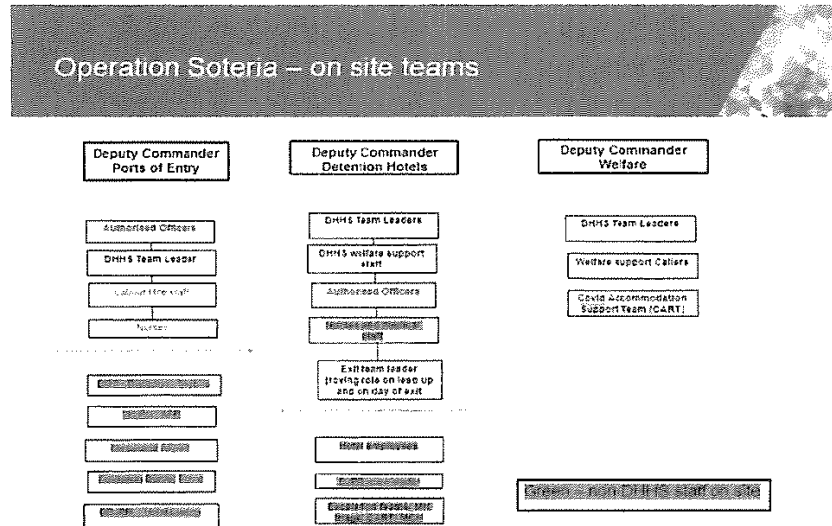
- b. the State Operational Arrangements (COVID-19) structure within the State Control Centre was as set out below:



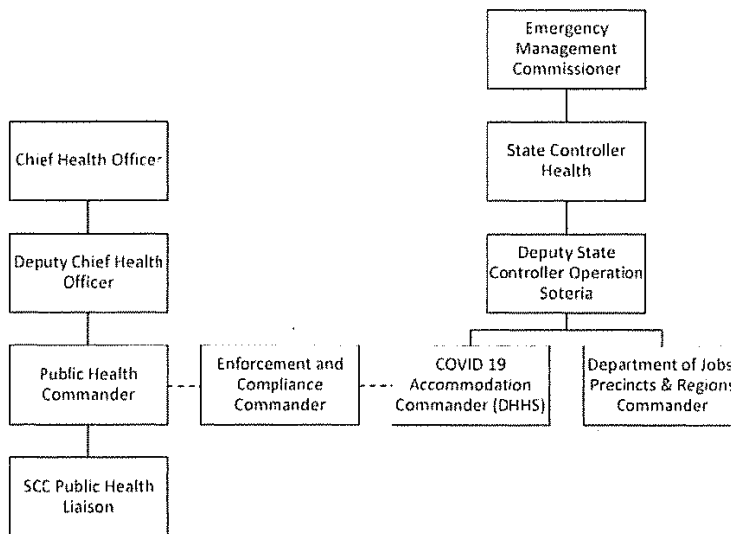
59. Following the transition of Operation Soteria into the Emergency Operations Centre in mid-April 2020, the command structure within the Emergency Operations Centre was as set out below:







60. Following the release of version 2.0 of the Operation Soteria Operation Plan (addressed in response to question 15, above), the structure in place for the governance of strategy and policy and the operation of Operation Soteria was as set out below:

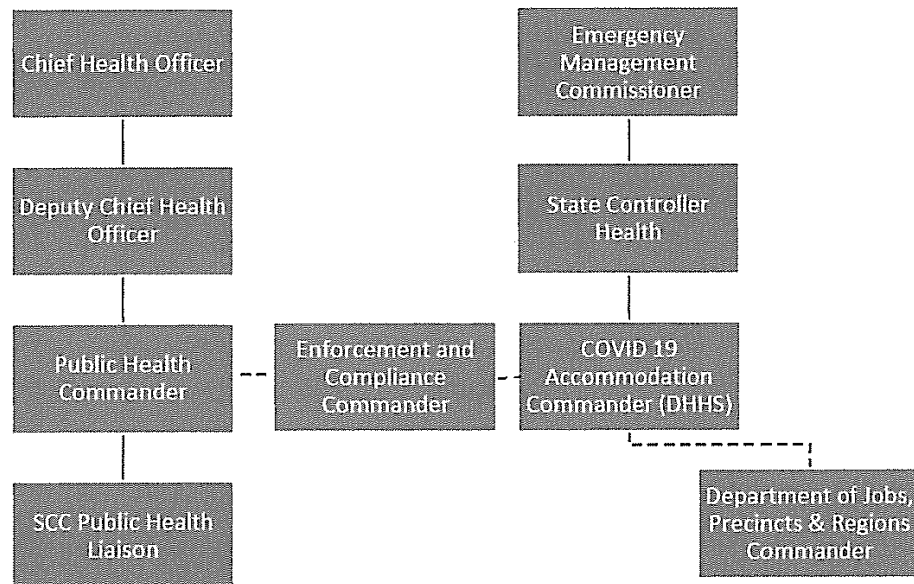


This does not represent a line of control for the operation or the wider COVID-19 overall State response. The Emergency Management Commissioner has responsibility for ensuring control arrangements are in place and for coordination but is not in the 'line of control' as represented in this diagram. The Department of Health and Human Services is the control agency for emergencies relating to human disease, including a pandemic, as specified in section 54 of the Act. The State Controller – Health (through the Deputy State

Controller Operations Soteria), operating through the Commander COVID-19 Accommodation, has operational accountability for the quarantine accommodation of returned travellers.

61. Following the conclusion of the role of Deputy State Controller – Operation Soteria on 1 May 2020:

- a. the structure in place for the governance of strategy and policy and the operation of Operation Soteria was as set out below:



- b. the command structure within the Emergency Operations Centre was as set out below:



63. On 27 July 2020, the Department of Justice and Community Safety assumed responsibility for Victoria's Hotel Quarantine Program under new control and coordination arrangements approved by the Crisis Council of Cabinet. The Department of Health and Human Services remains the control agency.

**Question 25: What issues were raised with you, or were identified by you, about how agencies (or parties engaged by/for them) were performing their roles with respect to the Hotel Quarantine Program? Please describe those issues and when they were raised.**

64. Other than the issues with the private security contractors discussed above, no issues were raised with me or identified by me about how agencies were performing their roles with respect to the Hotel Quarantine Program. I consider that the agencies worked together constructively, under incredible pressure, to run the Hotel Quarantine Program.
65. From time to time, issues arose in connection with the Program (including, by way of example, how to respond to positive cases in quarantine, how to address mental health concerns of residents in the program and how to deal with individuals who were refusing quarantine) but I do not consider these as being issues in connection with agencies' performance of their roles.
66. I have been aware, from time to time, through my discussions with the State Controller, of some frustration between the Department of Health and Human Services (who is the control agency) and the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (who was responsible for sourcing accommodation, including the hotels and security, for Operation Soteria) with respect to the hotels being used for Operation Soteria. I understood from my discussions with the State Controller that the Department of Health and Human Services, as control agency, wanted a greater say about which hotels were being contracted by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions.

**Question 26: Was an Emergency Operations Centre established for Operation Soteria? If so when and why?**

67. Yes, an Emergency Operations Centre was established by the Department of Health and Human Services to take the lead for the operational activities associated with Operation Soteria. It was established on approximately 18 April 2020 by the Department of Health and Human Services. It was established at the direction of the State Controller to reflect the increased capacity of the Operation and the escalating emergency. A resource from the Australian Defence Force was embedded within the Emergency Operations Centre to provide planning support to the Department of Health and Human Services.

**Requests for support**

**Question 27: Information before the Inquiry indicates that you or Emergency Management Victoria may have requested Australian Defence Force to provide support. If that is the case, please describe what support was requested and the circumstances of that request (particularly, when and how it was made, and whether this was a standard step to take when dealing with pandemic response).**

68. Since 16 March 2020, I have made 24 requests for ADF assistance to support Victoria's general COVID-19 response. The ADF can be requested to support the State for any emergency when the State has exhausted its own resource capacity.
69. On 24 June 2020, I submitted a request for Australian Government non-financial assistance. The request was for 850 personnel to provide compliance and monitoring support to the Department of Health and Human Services at the hotels being used for mandatory quarantine. The request was for the period 26 June 2020 to 31 July 2020. The request was made in accordance with the Australian Government Disaster Response Plan (COMDISPLAN) [DOJ.502.009.8963].
70. I made the request following a meeting on 24 June 2020 with the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (Melissa Skilbeck), a representative of the Australian Defence Force (Colonel John Molnar), and the State Controller - Health at which I was told that the Department of Health and Human Services (as control agency) had determined that there was a need to find an alternative to the private security firms. I raised the Australian Defence Force as an option, and asked the Department of Health and Human Services how many personnel would be required if private security was to be replaced by Australian Defence Force personnel. I submitted the request so that we had the Australian Defence Force as an available option.
71. The following morning (25 June 2020), I rescinded the request following a telephone call from the Secretary of the Department of Justice and Community Safety (Rebecca Falkingham) as other options were being considered (such as Victoria Police members and Protective Services Officers) rather than the Australian Defence Force [DOJ.501.001.3105].
72. At the time that I made the request, the Australian Defence Force was already involved in the response effort, including providing support in planning, logistics and intelligence at the State Control Centre, assisting the public health response through testing and logistics support, and assisting Victoria Police operations including at vehicle check points.
73. None of the plans, activities, documents or structures set out at questions 4 or 5 above, insofar as they relate to a pandemic response, require a request for ADF assistance. As described above, the Australian Defence Force has made, and continues to make, an important contribution to Victoria's response to the COVID-19 health emergency. I am in regular contact with representatives of the Australian Defence Force as part of the State control arrangements.

**Question 28: What role did the Australian Defence Force play in planning, coordinating or managing how international travellers and returning residents would be detained as part of the Hotel Quarantine Program?**

74. The Australian Defence Force were involved in the initial planning of Operation Soteria. Representatives of the Australian Defence Force participated in the Operation Soteria planning and coordination meetings on 27 and 28 March 2020 (referred to in my response to question 18, above). During these discussions I did

not seek nor did the representatives of the Australian Defence Force offer assistance as part of the hotel quarantine program.

75. At the teleconference on 27 March 2020, I expressed the view that the Australian Defence Force should continue assisting with the planning of Operation Soteria, but that I did not see a need for 'boots on the ground'. In other words, at that time, it was my view that the Australian Defence Force did not need to play a role in coordinating or managing the detention of international travellers and returning residents as part of Operation Soteria. I recall that this view was reached following consideration of the requirements of each of the phases of the operation and a number of discussions that I was involved in with representatives of the Department of Health and Human Services, the State Controller – Health and representatives of Victoria Police (including Graham Ashton, then Chief Commissioner).
76. The Australian Defence Force subsequently provided support to the Emergency Operations Centre when the operation transitioned from the State Control Centre to the Emergency Operations Centre.

**Question 29: What role did Victoria Police play in planning, coordinating or managing how international travellers and returning residents would be detained as part of the Hotel Quarantine Program?**

77. Representatives of Victoria Police participated in the planning discussions for Operation Soteria between 27 and 28 March 2020, including the Operation Soteria Coordination meeting on 28 March 2020.
78. As described at paragraph 46 above and reflected in the first draft Operation Soteria Operation Plan addressed at paragraph 49 above, on 27 March 2020 I was informed that it was the preference of Victoria Police that *private security be the first line of security at the accommodation, and that Victoria Police provide additional responsive support as required.*
79. Victoria Police has had the following role in connection with the Hotel Quarantine Program.
- a. Phase 1 (reception): At the airport, preparing international travellers and returning residents for transition from air-side to state-side security (including liaising with the Australian Federal Police and Border Force) and preparing and establishing state-side security;
  - b. Phase 2 (transport): Security and management of passenger disembarkation from transport to accommodation, marshalling and security of incoming passengers and receiving manifests of passengers from the Australian Federal Police on arrival at accommodation;
  - c. Phase 3 (accommodation): Provision of support to private security as required.
80. With respect to the provision of support to private security, Victoria Police did not have a dedicated onsite role providing support to or supervising private security. Rather, Victoria Police responded to calls for assistance as required, if a 000 call was made. They undertook this function as part of their normal functions as Victoria Police members. Victoria Police were also involved in enhancing the evacuation plans for the

hotels that formed part of the Operation Soteria program. My recollection was that when Operation Soteria commenced, the Australian Federal Police would escort returning travellers to the hotels and then Victoria Police would be on-site to ensure that the reception was secure. Similarly, Victoria Police were on site during, at least, the early stages of this operation to ensure that travellers finishing their detention could leave unhindered.

**Other matters**

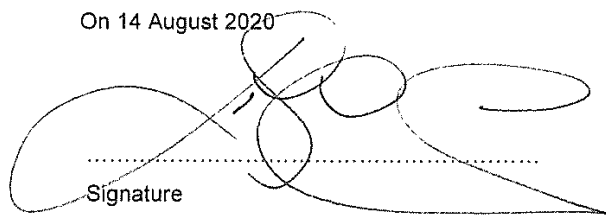
**Question 30: If you wish to include any additional information in your witness statement, please set it out below.**

81. N/A

Signed by Andrew Crisp

On 14 August 2020

.....  
Signature

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