

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

INQUIRY INTO THE COVID-19 HOTEL QUARANTINE PROGRAM

BOARD: THE HONOURABLE JENNIFER COATE AO

DAY 7

10.00 AM, MONDAY, 24 AUGUST 2020

MELBOURNE, VICTORIA

**MR A. NEAL QC appears with MS R. ELLYARD, MR B. IHLE,
MR S. BRNOVIC and MS J. MOIR as Counsel Assisting the Board of Inquiry**

MS K. O’GORMAN appears for Crown Melbourne Ltd

**MS C. HARRIS QC appears with MS P. KNOWLES and MR M. McLAY for
the Department of Health and Human Services**

**MS J. CONDON QC appears with MS R. PRESTON and MR R. CHAILE for
the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions**

**DR K. HANSCOMBE QC appears with MS H. TIPLADY for the Department
of Justice and Community Safety**

**MR R. ATTIWILL QC appears with MS C. MINTZ for the Department of
Premier and Cabinet**

MR S. PALMER appears with MR L. MOLESWORTH for Melbourne Hotel Group Pty Ltd trading as Holiday Inn Melbourne Airport

MS A. ROBERTSON appears with MS E. GOLSHTEIN for MSS Security Pty Ltd

MR A. WOODS appears for Rydges Hotels Ltd

MR A. MOSES SC appears with MS J. ALDERSON for Unified Security Group (Australia) Pty Ltd

MR R. CRAIG SC appears with MR D. OLDFIELD for Wilson Security Pty Ltd

MS D. SIEMENSMA appears for Your Nursing Agency (Victoria) Pty Ltd

CHAIR: Good morning, Mr Ihle.

MR IHLE: Good morning, Madam Chair.

5 Madam Chair, there are three witnesses to give evidence today. The first is Mr Ofli,
who you may see appears on your screen already. But prior to Mr Ofli being called,
I just indicate that I'm aware there are members of counsel appearing today that
haven't previously appeared before the Board in this Inquiry, and I just invite them to
10 make their appearance, starting with Dr Hanscombe for the Department of Justice
and Community Safety.

DR HANSCOMBE QC: Good morning, Madam Chair. Pursuant to the grant of
leave on 14 August, I appear with Ms Tiplady, as Mr Ihle said, for the Department of
Justice and Community Safety.

15

CHAIR: Thank you, Dr Hanscombe.

DR HANSCOMBE QC: If the Board please.

20 MR IHLE: I may have given the impression that there was more than that. Certainly
Dr Hanscombe was the only member of counsel I was referring to there. So unless
there are any others, and I'll wait a moment to give them that opportunity.

CHAIR: There don't appear to be, Mr Ihle.

25

MR IHLE: No. That being the case, I call Mr Ofli.

CHAIR: Mr Ofli, can you both hear me and see me?

30 MR OFLI: Yes.

CHAIR: Thank you. I'm sure you've had it explained to you that for the purposes of
giving your evidence, you will need to make a solemn promise, and I understand you
wish to do that by way of affirmation, so for that purpose, I'll hand you to my
35 associate, who will take you through the affirmation.

Thank you, Madam Associate.

40 **KAAN OFLI, AFFIRMED**

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Ofli. I'll hand you back to Mr Ihle now. I just wonder
whether Mr Ofli could sit a little bit closer to the microphone that's picking up his
45 voice. The voice is a little bit soft.

MR OFLI: Sorry. Is that better?

CHAIR: It's a little bit better. If you can just try that again?

MR OFLI: How's that?

5

CHAIR: That's getting better.

MR OFLI: I can just lean in, I guess, like this.

10 CHAIR: It will be better if you can just keep yourself as close to the device that you're using that's picking up your voice, Mr Ofli, thank you.

Thank you, Mr Ihle.

15 MR IHLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr Ofli, I'm having a bit of difficulty hearing you as well, so I'm going to ask you to keep your voice up as well, which might feel a bit awkward, but I think it's important that we all hear what you have to say.

MR OFLI: Definitely, no problem.

20

EXAMINATION BY MR IHLE

25 MR IHLE: Mr Ofli, your full name is Kaan Ofli; is that right?

A. Yes, that's correct.

Q. You have provided a written statement to this Inquiry?

30

A. Yes.

Q. That's a statement dated 21 August of this year?

35

A. Yes.

Q. And that statement is five pages long?

A. Correct.

40

Q. And has 29 paragraphs of evidence in it?

A. Yes.

45 Q. Are the contents of that statement true?

A. Yes, they are.

Q. And as far as you're concerned, are the contents of that statement accurate?

A. Yes.

5

MR IHLE: I tender the statement, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: Exhibit 027.

10

EXHIBIT #027 - STATEMENT OF KAAAN OFLI

MR IHLE: If the Board pleases.

15

Mr Ofli, I'm going to take you to a number of parts of the statement and ask you to expand upon or explain certain aspects of it.

A. Okay.

20

Q. If there's any question that I ask that you don't understand, please just let me know.

Can I confirm that you were in quarantine, along with your partner; is that right?

25

A. Yes, that's right.

Q. And the dates that you were in quarantine started upon your arrival in Melbourne on 9 April and finished on 23 April?

30

A. Yes.

Q. And for that period of time, you were quarantined and detained at the Pan Pacific Hotel?

35

A. Yes.

Q. Can I take you to the check-in process when you arrived at the hotel. You say at paragraph 8 that there were forms that needed to be filled out when you got to the hotel?

40

A. Yes.

Q. Did you fill out those forms or was it your partner that filled them out?

45

A. We both filled them out.

Q. And you filled out forms on your own behalf?

A. Yes.

5 Q. On those forms, was one of the bits of information you were required to provide concerned your dietary requirements?

A. Yes.

10 Q. And I understand from your statement that your partner has certain food allergies and she filled out the form according to those allergies?

A. Correct.

15 Q. And you had certain food requirements as well?

A. Yes.

Q. What were those requirements?

20

A. For myself, it was just requesting that the food would be Halal.

Q. Yes. And for your partner, it was to do with nuts, was it?

25 A. Yes, peanuts and dairy.

Q. Okay. Thank you. You detail in your statement that you had problems with the food that was served to you, first of all in relation to the amount of food that was given to you.

30

A. Yeah. Pretty much from our first meal, we just noticed that it was just a shortage of food. You know, it was pretty much one meal, one meal that we were receiving, one piece of fruit. We weren't getting any bottles of water, anything like that. We were told to drink from the basin for water. So that's that.

35

Q. You say in paragraph 10 of your statement that you called the government services line on a number of occasions?

A. Yeah. So every time that we felt that it was strange or we had a shortage of food, we would initially call reception at the lobby of the hotel, and then they would tell us that we had to call DHHS. And so we would, but it would just take, like, 30 minutes or an hour to get through to them sometimes. That was the process that we had to go through if we wanted, you know, an extra bread roll or anything like that.

40

45 Q. At paragraph 10 of your statement, you say, we "found it humiliating to have to call and plead for the basics, it was really disheartening". Can you just expand on that for a moment. What do you mean by "pleading for the basics"?

5 A. Well, when you're in a room with no circulating air or any --- we weren't even allowed to go outside. So when we had a shortage of food, it would just --- I would feel embarrassed to have to call and be like, "Hey, can I get another meal or can I get another piece of bread roll or can I have a bottle of water?" It was embarrassing, because from the day one, it was just really hard to get them things. So every day when I had to call three times a day, pretty much, for breakfast, lunch and dinner, it was really starting to get to me, where I almost felt like I didn't want to keep calling and hassling for just the basic things I needed, which was food and water.

10 Q. In respect of the calls, who made those calls? Was it just your partner, just you, or was it a combination of the two of you?

15 A. It was a combination.

Q. It emerged on day 1010 of your stay, according to your statement, perhaps one of the reasons why you were being given so little food. Can you explain to the Board how that all unfolded?

20 A. Yes. We would get --- every morning we would get a call from the nurse, pretty much they would just call and ask if we had any symptoms, every morning. On the 10th day, it was the same call asking for symptoms, and it was my partner that had answered the call, and she said, "No, we don't have any symptoms." And the lady said, "What do you mean by 'we'"? And she said, "Well, there's two of us in here." 25 And at that point she said, "We've only got you down here that's staying inside the room." So she got that information and corrected it. So I guess for the whole 10 days, I wasn't actually in the system. So

30 Q. Prior to that phone call on that day --- you told us before that you'd called the 1800 number and called down to reception that there was a mixture of the two of you --- had you had any conversations with the nurses prior to that day?

A. Yes, yes.

35 Q. And so even when the nurses had called prior to that day, presumably calling to speak to your partner, because that's who's in the system, they're getting a male's voice on the phone and there's no questions that are raised there?

40 A. No. When we asked why they didn't have that information on board, the only thing that she said was that she wasn't sure, that it was her first day.

45 To be honest, there was a few times that we would speak to either someone from the lobby --- actually, a lot of people from the lobby would say that it was their first time when it came to helping us out with something. So it seemed like there was a lot of people that it was their first day on the job.

Q. Prior to that 10th day, the day when it was identified, perhaps, that the system

only had one person in that room, had anyone been to your room?

A. No.

5 Q. Had you had any visit from nurses or anything like that prior to that phone call on the 10th day?

10 A. There was, I guess --- I'll have to go through this thing to see which day. I did have one day where a DHHS worker did come to the room to speak to us with security. But prior to that the nurses wouldn't come to the room, they would just call us.

Q. In another part of your statement, you detail going for a walk, I think on 12 April.

15 A. Yes.

Q. Which would make that about day 3 of your stay. Did you go for the walk on 12 April?

20 A. Yes.

Q. So both yourself and your partner had left your room on 12 April, but it wasn't until day 10, about 19 April, that it was realised that there was two in your room, according to the records. Is that your evidence?

25 A. Yes.

Q. And when you went for that walk, did someone come to your room and escort you for that walk?

30 A. Yes.

Q. Just going back to it, when you arrived at Melbourne Airport, you were given a Detention Notice.

35 A. Correct.

Q. Were you given your own Detention Notice?

40 A. Yes.

Q. And when you got to the hotel, you have already given evidence that you both filled out forms about your dietary requirements; is that right?

45 A. Yes.

Q. But, notwithstanding that, for some reason the system didn't have you in with it

for 10 days. Do you know why?

A. I'm not sure.

5 Q. When this issue became apparent --- that is, on day 10 --- you were then told, according to paragraph 13, that your dietary requirements could not be accommodated by the hotel. Is that right?

10 A. Yes, that's right. They gave us --- they would always slip forms underneath the door, so they gave us a form that we could --- at that point, which was, I think it's that they couldn't accommodate it, they said that we could fill out a form and we could order from Uber Eats or from any delivery company and that we would get reimbursed.

15 Q. You filled out a form when you arrived at the hotel in respect of dietary requirements where you identified that you ate a Halal diet?

A. Correct.

20 Q. Did you have any realisation about the 10 days of food that you'd been served prior to being identified as not being within the system?

A. No, I wasn't aware.

25 Q. You say in paragraph 13 that you had realised at that point, being told that the hotel couldn't accommodate your dietary requirements, that:

It was a shock for us when we realised the meat I had been eating was not Halal.

30

A. Yes, correct.

Q. Can you just talk us through that and how you came to that realisation?

35 A. Well, you know, like, trying to stay sane, you know, Ramadan was about one week, it was coming up one week after our stay. So staying sane and really --- praying every day was a big thing for me, staying in quarantine. So, you know, at the 10th day, when I realised that the food that I had requested, which was Halal, that I wasn't eating Halal food, it just --- it really just, yeah, it hurt me, you know. It made me feel really sad. And, you know, what are you going to do? You need your
40 nutrition, you need to eat. I was just really disappointed, that's all.

Q. After that time and with the information that you were given, you were told --- I think you referred to before that you could order from Uber Eats, things like that,
45 because the hotel couldn't accommodate your dietary requirements; is that right?

A. Yes.

Q. So when the food was ordered from Uber Eats, who paid for it?

A. We would pay ourselves.

5

Q. Were you told specifically that you had to pay yourself?

A. Yes. We were told that we would just simply get reimbursed, with the information that we filled out onto that form, which we still haven't been reimbursed until this day.

10

Q. I'm going to ask that a document be brought up, Mr Ofli, which is a document that you provided to the Inquiry. It's document WIT.0001.0027.0028. I think it's going to come up on the screen.

15

A. All right.

Q. Do you recognise this document? It's only three pages. I'll just ask that it be scrolled through. Do you recognise that?

20

A. Yes.

Q. Is that the form that you were provided with and then subsequently filled out in respect of the orders that you placed?

25

A. That's correct.

Q. Okay. If we can go back to the first page, you see the first line:

30

Thank you for completing the Food Safety questionnaire form and advising the department of your food allergy.

Do you recall when you got this form?

35

A. No, I don't.

Q. See the next line there:

40

The hotel and government cannot guarantee that your dietary needs can be met by the hotel.

Is that something you got towards the start of your stay?

A. It was on the 10th day.

45

Q. On the 10th day, okay. And if we can just go to the third page there, please. The operator will flip the page over. See that first substantial paragraph:

Guests who are advised to purchase meals through Uber Eats must be advised to purchase meals using their own funds but retain receipts for all purchases....

5 A. Yes.

Q. Is that what you were talking about before, where you had to use your own money and then seek reimbursement?

10 A. Yes, it is.

MR IHLE: I tender that document, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: Exhibit 028.

15

EXHIBIT #028 - DOCUMENT WIT.0001.0027.0028, ATTACHED TO THE STATEMENT OF KAAAN OFLI

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MR IHLE: That can come off the screen, please.

Now, at the conclusion of your stay in quarantine, did you have the receipts for any food that you'd ordered?

25

A. Yes.

Q. And before we go to those receipts, at the time you were in quarantine did you have sufficient money to be able to order the food that you needed?

30

A. We were --- obviously we had just come back from overseas and we didn't have jobs at that point, and it was really expensive as well; even we were purchasing water as well. So I think after, like, the first or second day, we borrowed money from my partner's mother.

35

Q. To pay for your food?

A. Correct.

40 Q. And then when you left quarantine, you filled out that form for reimbursement. Just getting those dates right, you left quarantine on 23 April this year?

A. Yes.

45 Q. When did you submit the forms in relation to being reimbursed, do you recall?

A. One moment. I'll just check with my partner.

Q. If you don't recall the specific date, do you recall was it shortly after you left quarantine or was it some time thereafter?

5 A. It was in May.

Q. In May, okay. We're now in August, towards the end of August. Have you been reimbursed?

10 A. [indistinct].

Q. Sorry, you will have to speak up.

15 A. No, we haven't. We've contacted a few times, but we've just been put to different departments.

Q. I want to ask you about the room and cleaning of the room. You detail in your statement that you had asked for some cleaning products and things to help you clean the room, because there was two of you living in it for 14 days.

20

A. Yes. You know, if you --- we obviously didn't get much time to go outside, I think our window was only about 10 or 15 minutes, so as a professional athlete, I would train inside the room, you know, keeping sane. And after a while, we ran out of, you know, clothes by the 10th day and [indistinct] as well, and when we asked --- they didn't offer any cleaning services, which we understood, because of contamination and whatnot. Firstly, yes, we needed to get our clothes washed and they didn't offer a laundry service, and we got a detergent that was delivered to the room and we were told to clean the clothes in the basin. So we did do that. And just because there was no circulation in the room, it was really hard to dry the clothes.

30

And furthermore, we requested a vacuum so we can at least, you know, vacuum the floor, and we got given a vacuum. I believe that it was a communal vacuum that was maybe on each floor or going to all the floors, I'm not too sure, but it had a horrible smell coming out of it. So I'm not too sure if that was getting disinfected between uses. But after we used it, we were just told to leave it out the front door. And I even noticed that when I was picking up my meals, I opened up the door and I saw someone else taking the vacuum to their room.

35

As for like, we asked for some disinfectant and whatnot, some wipes, and they said that we couldn't provide us with that. Once again, anything we needed, we had to call DHHS and they would confirm if they could help us or not. That was the procedure.

40

Q. I just want to go back to the vacuum cleaner. As I understand it, you said in your statement, and you've just repeated it then, that you asked for some disinfectants or disinfectant wipes.

45

A. Yes.

Q. You were concerned, I presume, about the vacuum being used by other people within the hotel?

5

A. Yes, correct.

Q. You weren't told about whether the vacuum was disinfected between uses or anything like that?

10

A. Not at all. I can guarantee, the smell coming out of that machine, it was not being disinfected.

Q. So when you asked for disinfectant, what did you get?

15

A. We got some spray and wipes. I think it was even maybe Windex or something like that.

Q. Okay. Mr Ofli, I'm going to take you to the fresh air breaks that you had. How many fresh air breaks did you have in your 14 days in quarantine?

20

A. I would say no more than five.

Q. Okay. The first of those, you detailed in your statement, occurred on 12 April; is that right?

25

A. Yes.

Q. Had you asked for any fresh air breaks prior to that date?

30

A. Yes, I did.

Q. And when you requested the fresh air breaks prior to 12 April, what were you told?

35

A. I was told that we weren't going out for walks.

Q. Okay. And then that changed on 12 April, did it?

40

A. Yes. I remember having a conversation with the security guard that was taking us down, and we had asked him when, you know, "We're allowed to go for walks now? What's changed?" And he said that someone had just committed suicide, "So we are now taking everyone out for walks, or breaks, you know, to go outside".

45

Q. And that's the only information you had as to why the previous request you'd made and been told, "We're not doing fresh air walks", and then you're getting the fresh air walk on 12 April, that's the only information you had to go on as to why you

were getting the walk on that date and thereafter?

A. Exactly, yes.

5 Q. You've spoken a little bit about the cleanliness of the room and needing to clean it. But whilst you were on your walks, did you make other observations about people social distancing, infection control measures that were being employed and things like that?

10 A. First of all, when we would get escorted out, we noticed that the security guards that were in the foyer or on our floor, most of the time that we did see them, they would have their masks off. And then, you know, I guess once we started walking towards them, they would put their masks on. There was three of us, I guess, in the elevator; I don't know if that means anything.

15 We were social distancing somewhat outside. People were still getting quite close to each other and chatting and talking. We weren't advised to --- it wasn't, you know --- sorry, we weren't advised that we had to wear our mask once we were outside, so once we got outside, we were taking off our masks, which was nice anyway, being in
20 the room all day.

Yeah, other than that, it was just pretty much just in front of the hotel, everyone was kind of just walking around the roundabout.

25 Q. Was there an area that they segmented off for those people that were being detained to have their break?

A. Yeah, somewhat. You know, it's quite a populated area, so there were still some people working, some tradies and people riding their bikes and whatnot through the
30 space.

Q. Were you taken on a walk --- that is, you and your partner taken for a walk --- let's go just to this first walk --- by yourselves? Was it just the two of you or were there other people there?

35 A. There were other people. There were people downstairs already. I believe that whenever we did go for a walk, it was the whole floor going for a walk and they had some sort of system like that.

40 Q. And so were you able to communicate with those other people that were there walking? Did you get to know whether they were other detainees, for example?

A. Yes. There were some people that had a couple of days left and were kind of happy to talk to us and whatnot.

45 Q. Was social distancing enforced while you were having a break with these other detainees?

A. [indistinct]

5 Q. So you talked about masks coming off. How close were people talking to one another?

A. I don't think the 1.5 was enforced.

10 Q. I just want to go now, Mr Ofli, to the circumstances and what had occurred by the time you were leaving. As we covered earlier on, you left on 23 April. Prior to leaving detention, were you ever offered a test for COVID?

A. No.

15 Q. Was there ever any discussion around tests for COVID?

20 A. Yes. We personally asked for a test. We wanted to get tested, just to know, like, obviously, if we had the COVID or not. And we were told that we weren't allowed to have a test unless we had symptoms. And we didn't have any symptoms, you know. But at the same time, we were also told by security that there was a floor for people that had COVID, COVID-19. So we weren't sure if --- we were obviously already isolated but we weren't sure that if you come up positive, if you would go to this isolation floor.

25 So I personally had --- on one day I had a wisdom tooth coming out, so I personally didn't want to tell anyone or seek any medical assistance or anything like that, thinking that, you know, that would be a symptom, you know, a sore throat, my tooth, mouth, whatever. But, no, we were never given an opportunity to have a test unless we had symptoms.

30 Q. And so the day that you left, notwithstanding that you didn't have symptoms, you hadn't been tested; is that right?

A. Yes, that's right.

35 Q. You'd had, I think your evidence earlier before was, maybe four or five walks?

A. Yes.

40 Q. And they were walks where you were told you could remove your masks and you were socialising with other detainees?

A. Yes.

45 Q. And the 1.5m was not enforced?

A. People were obviously cautious of the virus itself, so I'm not going to say that,

you know, we were hugging each other and kind of whatnot, but, no, there was no enforcement at that time.

5 Q. Okay. But by the time you left, you hadn't had a test, even though you'd asked for one?

A. Correct.

10 Q. And were you told whether you should be wearing PPE as you left the hotel?

A. No.

Q. Did you wear PPE as you left the hotel?

15 A. I did, yes.

Q. Thank you, Mr Ofli, that covers the questions that I have for you.

I can indicate that there are two other parties with leave to appear who have questions for you and they will have applications to make to the Chair. I'll invite counsel for DHHS to make that application, which I understand focuses on paragraph 21 of Mr Ofli's statement, Madam Chair.

25 CHAIR: Good morning, Ms Harris.

MS HARRIS QC: Good morning, Madam Chair. I also wish to seek leave to ask one question about the number that Mr Ofli was calling that he's talked about in his evidence this morning, as well as a brief question about paragraphs 21 and 22.

30 CHAIR: Yes. Leave is granted, Ms Harris.

MS HARRIS QC: Thank you, Madam Chair.

35 **CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS HARRIS QC**

40 MS HARRIS QC: Mr Ofli, you mentioned having to call a number when you were getting inadequate food. Was the number that you were calling the 1800 government support services number that had been provided to you in the document when you arrived in quarantine?

A. Yes.

45 Q. And when you had other queries, was that the number that you used?

A. Yes.

Q. The question that I wanted to ask you, Mr Ofli, was in relation to your first fresh air break. You've given evidence that that was on 12 April and that your partner asked a question as to the reason for fresh air breaks being given for the first time and a security guard mentioned that there had been a person who had taken their own life in hotel quarantine.

A. Yes.

Q. And that the security guard understood that that's why you were getting these fresh air breaks.

Now, evidence will be given that fresh air breaks were being planned well prior to the time of that event, which was 11 April, and that in some circumstances when fresh air breaks were needed by individual guests, they were given before that time, so that it wasn't that event that led to fresh air breaks. It's possible, isn't it, that the security guard may not have known all of that background when he told you that that was the reason for getting a fresh air break, isn't it?

A. I would say that's correct. But there was also another moment where a --- you know, I was feeling very claustrophobic and there was one night that I wanted to go out for a walk, and obviously the walks were scheduled usually during the day at certain times. And I wasn't getting any assistance from the 1800 number or reception, because there wasn't a DHHS on premises. So I had to somewhat wait for this person to come to the premises before he could escort me down to the walk. And at that point, I was feeling very claustrophobic so I actually opened the front door and I kind of leaned out and, you know, yelled to the security and I said, "Look, can someone help me? Can we go out for a walk? Can you guys escort me down?" And eventually they helped me out, we went out for the walk.

What caught my attention is the next day, a different DHHS worker came to my door and he told me that if I had opened my door and spoke to the security guard, they would have to call Victoria Police and there would be a \$20,000 fine. And he also did say that --- pretty much word for word, he said, "You should feel lucky because people at Crown aren't getting walks."

Q. Did that person introduce themselves to you?

A. Yes.

MS HARRIS QC: Thank you, Madam Chair. There's no further questions.

CHAIR: Thank you, Ms Harris.

MR IHLE: Madam Chair, I understand that Mr Oldfield, on behalf of Wilson Security, has an application to make in respect of questions directed to paragraphs 23 and 24 of Mr Ofli's statement.

MR OLDFIELD: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. In addition, there is one matter arising from examination which is directed to paragraph 19. It relates to fresh air walks.

5

CHAIR: I'll grant you that leave, Mr Oldfield.

MR OLDFIELD: Thank you, Madam Chair.

10

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR OLDFIELD

MR OLDFIELD: Mr Ofli, you just gave some evidence, in response to a question from Mr Ihle, about the location where you had the fresh air walks in, I think you said it was, a courtyard out the front of the hotel?

15

A. Yes.

Q. And you've said it was an area, there was a public area where you saw tradies and other people walking?

20

A. Yes.

Q. Can I just clarify, it's the case, isn't it --- and you say this in your statement at paragraph 19 --- the area where you had the walks, if there were public in the area, the "security ushered them away"?

25

A. Yes, yes. Definitely [indistinct].

30

Q. And you make it clear in your statement too that you, or "we", being those in quarantine, "were never in close proximity to the public" when you were on those walks. Is that the case?

35

A. Yes.

Q. Thank you. Now, just in relation to what you were talking about with Ms Harris, the event where you just described not being able to talk to anybody on the telephone about going out for a walk in an evening, and you opened the door and asked a security guard if they could help. Do you remember that?

40

A. Yes.

Q. Was it the case that the security guard, when you opened the door, asked you to close the door and you followed that instruction?

45

A. No.

Q. The process, was it one where you opened the door and you said, "Look, I need some help, I need to go for a walk," and the security guard made some arrangements to try and help you, did he?

5

A. Yes.

Q. And if I just turn to your statement, you say that it was after a time, four security guards came to your door and accompanied you to go on a walk?

10

A. [indistinct]

Q. Sorry, I didn't quite get the answer on your mic.

15

A. Yes.

Q. Thank you. And so I take it there was a time where you were waiting in your room for security to come and respond?

20

A. Yes.

Q. And during that time you obviously had your door closed, I assume?

25

A. Yes.

Q. And you don't know what occurred insofar as discussions or what went on behind the scenes to arrange for that walk to happen for you, do you?

30

A. No.

Q. But needless to say that eventually your request was followed up and you were able to go on the walk. Is that the case?

35

A. Correct.

MR OLDFIELD: Okay. They were all the questions I had for Mr Ofli, Madam Chair. Thank you.

40

Thank you, Mr Ofli.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Oldfield. No other applications?

MR IHLE: Not of which I'm aware, Madam Chair.

45

And if there are no other applications, there's one matter arising from Ms Harris' cross-examination that I'd seek to raise by way of re-examination.

CHAIR: Yes. There's no other indication of any other party seeking leave, Mr Ihle, so I'll return to you for re-examination.

5 **RE-EXAMINATION BY MR IHLE**

MR IHLE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

10 Mr Ofli, Ms Harris was asking you questions just a moment ago about the telephone number that you called when you were having difficulties with the amount of food. Do you remember those questions?

A. Yes.

15

Q. And she asked you whether the number you'd called was the 1800 government services number?

A. Yes.

20

Q. It's the case, isn't it, though, that you also called down to reception, as you gave evidence before when I was asking you questions?

A. Correct.

25

Q. And you have also explained, in response to questions about the incident where you went to the door, and DHHS coming the next day and telling you that they would call the police should you do that again; were you ever given any phone number for any DHHS people?

30

A. No, not --- nothing direct, no.

Q. Right. So as far as the information that was provided to you by way of a number you can call if you have an issue, you had reception, you had the 1800 government services number. Did you have any other number? Was there any other person that you could call whilst confined to your room to try and get to the bottom of those things?

35

A. No.

40

Q. No? And other than that one occasion where the DHHS person came to your door and said that the police would be called if you opened the door again, did you have any other interaction with DHHS personnel, other than nurses?

45

A. No.

Q. No. But insofar as your conversations with nurses was concerned, that was ---

they called the room how frequently?

A. Every morning.

5 Q. Okay. So you would receive inbound calls from a nurse every morning?

A. Yes.

10 Q. And then so far as information as to who you could call if you needed help, you had a 1800 number and reception?

A. Correct.

15 Q. And that was it?

A. Yes.

MR IHLE: Thank you, Mr Ofli.

20 Thank you, Madam Chair. That concludes the examination of Mr Ofli.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Ofli. Thank you for your attendance at the Inquiry. You're now excused. You can turn your camera and sound off. Thanks, Mr Ofli.

25

THE WITNESS WITHDREW

30 MR IHLE: Madam Chair, the next witness is the witness known as Security 2. He's a witness over whom the Board has made a non-publication order in respect of both his image and identifying information. He's not yet available and he's scheduled to give evidence at 11.00. So if it's convenient, perhaps we stand down until that time.

35 CHAIR: Yes, I was going to make that observation, Mr Ihle, that I understand he's scheduled for 11.00, so it's more appropriate that we stick with the schedule for that witness. I'll stand the matter down now until 11.00.

MR IHLE: As the Board pleases.

40

ADJOURNED

[10.42 AM]

45

RESUMED

[11.06 AM]

CHAIR: Yes, Mr Ihle. I understand that the next witness is in place now and ready

to proceed.

MR IHLE: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. I understand there was a slight delay due to some technical issues but they have been resolved now.

5

Security 2 will appear by audio only. I see that he is connected and in the hearing room virtually.

CHAIR: Thank you.

10

Sir, are you able to hear me?

SECURITY 2: Yes, I am, Madam Chair.

15 CHAIR: Thank you. I understand that you wish to take the oath for the purposes of this hearing, so I will hand you over to my associate to administer the oath.

SECURITY 2: Okay. Thank you.

20

SECURITY 2, SWORN

25 CHAIR: Thank you, sir. If you replace the Bible and I'll hand you over to Mr Ihle now.

Thanks, Mr Ihle.

MR IHLE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

30

EXAMINATION BY MR IHLE

35 MR IHLE: Sir, can you hear me all right?

A. Yes, I can, Mr Ihle.

40 Q. Thank you very much. Sir, you've provided a signed statement to this Inquiry dated 21 August this year?

A. That's correct.

45 Q. That is a 10-page statement?

A. Correct.

Q. And it has 72 paragraphs of evidence within it?

A. Yes, it does.

5 Q. And your contact details and name are known to the Inquiry staff; is that correct?

A. That's right.

10 Q. That statement we've just referred to, I take it you have a copy of it there with you?

A. Yes, I do, Mr Ihle.

15 Q. So if we need to refer to that, we can do that. First of all, are the contents of that statement truthful?

A. Yes, they are.

20 Q. And are the contents of the statement accurate, to the best of your ability?

A. Yes, correct.

MR IHLE: I tender the statement, Madam Chair.

25 CHAIR: Exhibit 029.

MR IHLE: As the Board pleases.

30 **EXHIBIT #029 - STATEMENT OF SECURITY 2**

MR IHLE: Sir, I want to ask you about some aspects of that statement for the purposes of explanation and perhaps expanding.

35 A. Yes.

40 Q. As at, say, March this year, you were a person who held a private security licence?

A. Correct.

Q. How long had you held such a licence for?

45 A. Approximately six years.

Q. And during that six years, had you engaged in a number of security jobs?

A. That's correct.

5 Q. And prior to that, or aligned with that, you've also performed professional duties as an emergency services officer; is that right?

A. That's correct.

10 Q. And you have a Certificate III in Public Safety?

A. Yes, public safety, firefighting, and emergency operations.

Q. And you have particular professional experience in rescue systems?

15 A. Correct.

Q. And, by way of broad statement, have worked in dangerous and stressful environments?

20 A. Correct.

Q. So, turning to hotel quarantine and your involvement in hotel quarantine ---

25 A. Yes.

Q. --- you were involved, according to your statement, in providing private security at the Pullman Hotel?

30 A. That's correct.

Q. And then subsequently at what you've described as a COVID hotel?

A. Correct.

35 Q. And at the Pullman, you actually were involved in two separate rounds of providing services; is that right?

A. That's right.

40 Q. Just going to the COVID hotel ---

A. Yes.

45 Q. --- your understanding is that's a hotel which is entirely for COVID-positive people?

A. Yes. There was at least a COVID-positive person in each of the rooms that are

occupied.

Q. Right.

5 A. It could be --- if there's a family, it could be the whole family, or it might just be the father and the kids aren't. But in every room that's occupied, there is a COVID-positive person.

10 Q. You've described at paragraph 32 of your statement that, to your mind at least, that COVID-positive hotel was run like a hospital ward?

A. Yes, very much so.

15 Q. And should we take, from reading your statement, that that's a point of distinction you make between your experience at the COVID-positive hotel versus the Pullman Hotel that you'd worked at some time earlier?

A. Yes, there was a clear difference.

20 Q. And given those two experiences you've had, you feel that you're able to assist this Inquiry perhaps by pointing to some of the distinctions or differences between how those two different facilities were run at those times?

25 A. Yes, certainly.

Q. And also the differences in training that were required?

A. Yes, I can do that. Yes.

30 Q. And your own personal observations about infection control measures, including the use of personal protective equipment?

A. Correct, yes.

35 Q. It's your understanding too, isn't it, sir, that the COVID hotel was being run by the health arm of a large public health service, being Alfred Health?

A. That is correct.

40 Q. Who was the Pullman being run by, as far as you were concerned?

A. It was run by a private security company.

45 Q. We'll come to that in a moment.

A. Yes.

Q. And you also detail in your statement a period in which you were working where you saw a transition of the management or supervision of the COVID hotel transitioning to Corrections Victoria?

5 A. That is correct.

Q. Turning first of all, because it was the first in time, to your experiences at the Pullman Hotel ---

10 A. Yes.

Q. --- they were, by way of broad timeframe, during May and June of this year?

15 A. That is correct.

Q. And the security --- you've referred to a security company that ran that --- it's a matter of record before this Inquiry that that was Wilson Security.

20 A. Yes, correct.

Q. But you yourself were not engaged by Wilson Security?

A. I wasn't paid by Wilson. I was a guard under their chain of command.

25 Q. Okay. So who were you engaged by?

A. A company called Nexar Group.

30 Q. And how did you come to be engaged by Nexar Group?

A. Nexar were given a referral by one of my previous supervisors on another security job, that I was a good guard and would be a good fit for these roles.

35 Q. Okay. And you've already said you were paid by Nexar.

A. Correct.

40 Q. I won't ask you how much you were paid, but you've detailed in your statement at paragraph 24 that there were some guards paid \$22 an hour?

A. Yeah, approximately.

Q. And you go on to say that they were treated like cattle?

45 A. Look, yes and no. At the initial set-up, when you've got a whole heap of new guards coming on site and starting their first shift of the round, there's no room for pleasantries; it's very, very regimented. So in that regard. Yes, it's probably maybe

a bit too harsh to say "cattle", but certainly there's no pleasantries, it's straight into business.

5 Q. And you say that the shifts that were being done at that hotel were 12-hour shifts?
This is the Pullman.

A. Yes, that's correct.

10 Q. From 6 am to 6 pm?

A. We certainly had to be there at quarter to 6. Officially the hours could have been 6.30 to 6.30, but I'm actually not 100 per cent sure on that. But they were 12 hours.

15 Q. And you described what was occurring at the Pullman Hotel as toolbox meetings.

A. Yes.

20 Q. Can you take us through what a toolbox meeting means in general, but then more specifically what it meant at the Pullman Hotel, as far as you could observe it?

A. A toolbox meeting is where the shift supervisor will brief all of his personnel as to any changes that may have happened since the previous shift or if there's new guards coming on site, that they're identified and then given the PPE training.

25 Q. And is that what happened at the Pullman?

A. Yes, every morning.

30 Q. So every morning there was a toolbox meeting at the start of shift?

A. Yes, same too with the change of shift and the night shift coming on board.

Q. And when those meetings occurred, where did they occur?

35 A. There was a security room at that particular venue, so just in the foyer area of that, where the security room is located.

40 Q. And how much space was there in the foyer where the toolbox meeting was conducted?

45 A. Depending on --- I mean, there wasn't a huge amount of space but there was just enough. So basically everyone had to social distance and form a big C shape in front of the supervisor, and then once he was comfortable that everyone was distanced, he then went into the procedures and policies for PPE and infection control and down to basic stuff like which toilets the guards were allowed to use, which ones they weren't, which lifts to go to, how to access the building if you want to go on your breaks --- all the basic fundamentals of how they were running that hotel.

Q. And was that the same briefing that guards would receive, whether they were coming back for their fifth shift or whether they were there for their first shift?

5 A. They did do a separate sort of annex to the toolbox meeting if they were guards on their first shift, just to reiterate the PPE.

Q. Right. And whilst you were there working at the Pullman, was there ever any change in respect of PPE requirements?

10

A. No, there wasn't. It was standard all the way through from the time I was there.

Q. And what were those requirements at the Pullman?

15 A. The guards go onto their floor, they're to take a pair of gloves and a surgical mask and to be stationed on that floor until they were relieved by a reliever, and they weren't to leave that floor until that point.

Q. Was there any instruction about what they were to do with the mask and the gloves?

20

A. Yes. If there was a guest going on, for example, a fresh air break, two guards would go up and escort the guests onto their fresh air breaks, and that at point the guards that were located on that floor had to don their face mask and gloves and keep a social distance from the guests.

25

Q. And then once the guests had finished their fresh air break, what would they do with their mask and gloves?

30 A. They were to be disposed of straightaway into the yellow infection control bins or skips, and then as soon as that happened, you sanitised your hands and then you were --- that was the procedure.

35

Q. So how would one then get another mask and another set of gloves?

A. At each floor there was a PPE station which had three different size gloves, the hand sanitiser and face masks.

Q. At the toolbox meetings, there was also discussion about how you deal with any complaints or unruly behaviour?

40

A. That's correct.

Q. Including an explanation for the chain of command for escalation?

45

A. That's right.

Q. Now, at the period you were at the Pullman, did that change at all?

5 A. No, it was very straightforward and quite simple to understand. And that involved the shift supervisor would give out or would have written on the whiteboard his mobile number and all guards were to put that into their phone, plus the number of their relievers, and they were to call the shift supervisor.

Q. If there was an incident or ---

10 A. Yes, if there was any incident or even any queries. Yes, there was no problem --- the guards weren't to feel that they were seen to be silly or not understanding. It was very clear that you just ring that number and then it either escalates or gets resolved from that phone call.

15 Q. From that phone call to a shift supervisor, if it were to escalate, was there any explanation given at these toolbox meetings as to where it would be escalated to?

20 A. There was different --- yes, there was. It could be the case where a mental health nurse might need to attend or just a nurse in general, if one of the guests wasn't feeling too well, or if there was an enquiry more to do with the general running of the hotel or dietary requirements, that would then get forwarded on to the hotel and then they would ring the guest room number.

25 Q. And was there any information given to you about the Department of Health and Human Services and where, if at all, they would be involved should an incident or an issue arise?

30 A. Yes. They had their separate area, which would normally be the hotel's admin area, which was actually in the basement of this particular venue, and they were all located down there and they were readily available. And the supervisor had all their numbers, different departments. And also they, I believe, had touchpoint meetings throughout the shifts with that whole department downstairs.

35 Q. They're meetings that you weren't yourself party to, though, at the Pullman?

A. No, not at the Pullman.

Q. Okay. I just want to talk to you about the training prior to taking on this role.

40 A. Yes.

Q. You have to do training to get your private security licence; is that right?

45 A. That's correct, which involves, at a minimum, basic first aid and CPR.

Q. And to keep your registration, are there requirements for ongoing training or education?

A. Yes, there are. The first aid course has to be current, valid. So CPR every 12 months and, at a minimum, the first aid is either a two-year or a three-year point.

5 Q. Okay. And to undertake work in the Hotel Quarantine Program, were you required to do any other training?

10 A. No. Other than the toolbox meeting training that we received, there was no actual --- there was certain emails sent to all the guards about, you know, just placards of how to wash your hands. There were little things like that came through, but certainly no other training. Although some of the guards took it upon themselves to do little online courses while they were on the floors. We were on the floor for a while, so there were a couple that we did. I think I've listed one in my statement.

15 Q. Yes. In your statement at paragraph 20, you say that you "completed an Australian Government COVID course" ---

A. Correct.

20 Q. --- "which wasn't required to start the shift" ---

A. No.

25 Q. That was, "wasn't required to start the shift and was not part of the induction".

A. No, that's correct.

Q. So tell us about the circumstances which led to you doing that.

30 A. I actually came across this course just through a friend who lives up in Brisbane. And one of her friends has a hairdressing business, and I just noticed on her Facebook page, she had completed this course and then posted it up as a screenshot. So I just followed the links and came across the course. And it was fantastic, so I passed that on to anyone and everyone that I could.

35 Q. When did you do that course?

A. It would have been in the first week of being there, the first couple of days.

40 Q. So it was actually after you'd started working at the Pullman, was it?

A. Yes, that's right.

45 Q. And did you do it whilst you were working or did you do it in your spare time?

A. I logged on while I was at work and completed it at home on my personal computer.

Q. Turning to the issues around the COVID hotel, you had a slightly different role at that hotel, as I understand it. Is that right?

5 A. Yes, that's correct.

Q. What were the differences in your role at the COVID hotel versus what you'd been doing at the Pullman?

10 A. I guess I'd gone up a notch as far as I was now the supervisor, and I certainly took on board everything I'd learned at the Pullman and transferred that across to the COVID hotel.

Q. Who were you working for at that COVID hotel?

15

A. Same employer, the Nexar Group.

Q. Nexar again?

20 A. Yes .

Q. And who was running the security at that hotel?

A. The Alfred had their own private security provider.

25

Q. So whilst the Pullman security was run by Wilson Security, at the COVID hotel it was a different security provider?

A. Yes, that's correct.

30

Q. And as far as what the guards were required to do at the COVID hotel, was there a difference between the duties of the guards at the COVID hotel versus the Pullman?

35 A. Not really. Essentially the same thing. They had to sit on a floor. There was only one on each floor, because the COVID hotel is essentially half the size. Still the same amount of floors but just not as many rooms on them. So the guards had to sit in front of the lifts, essentially, in a little hallway. They weren't allowed to then walk around and onto the carpeted area of the hallways leading into the rooms. That was considered COVID. So, unlike the Pullman, they couldn't walk around. They were literally in a maybe 8 by 2 metre space on a chair and they had to wear --- they had to wear their masks and glasses or goggles the whole time they were on the floor.

40

Q. I'll come back to the PPE requirements at the COVID hotel in more detail in a moment. But you talk about at the COVID hotel your involvement at the touchpoint meetings. Can you explain to us what they were and what occurred at them?

45

5 A. They were held twice per shift or twice per day and that brought together DHHS,
the --- it was basically a team leader meeting. So the DHHS team leader would chair
the meeting. And then the team leader nurse would be there, team leader of cleaning
would be there, hotel management would be there, infection control at various points,
when they were on site, and generally people of interest. The authorised officer
would be there. And it was just a very, very helpful meeting and process for
everybody just to talk about issues, how many guests were expected to be arriving,
10 who was leaving, if we were having any problems with, you know, PPE, which we
didn't. We were abundantly supplied at that venue. So, yeah, that's what happened
in those meetings, and they were fantastic.

15 Q. You just said "whether there were any issues with PPE". You said there weren't
at the COVID hotel. Were there any issues with PPE at the Pullman?

A. No, there wasn't.

20 Q. So coming back to those touchpoint meetings that you were involved in at the
COVID hotel, you've described them at paragraph 34 as "a great opportunity to
understand and manage the changing dynamics of the hotel".

A. That's right.

25 Q. So other than the numbers of people that were at the hotel, what other types of
issues were discussed at the meetings?

30 A. This particular venue is quite small in size as far as the main entry point, the foyer
of the hotel itself, and there was no effective --- there was a loading dock in the rear
laneway, but it wasn't seen to be effective. The laneway was quite small. And the
way of infection control was that everything went through that little foyer. So the
foyer is no bigger than an average person's lounge room. So, yes, all the food, the
cleaners, the security, absolutely everyone that came into that hotel, came through
that foyer.

35 Q. You say at the COVID hotel too, when it comes to the security guards, that there
were toolbox meetings as well?

A. Yes.

40 Q. Can you describe what occurred at them and perhaps any differences there were
between the toolbox meetings at the COVID hotel versus those that were conducted
at the Pullman?

45 A. With the toolbox meetings at the COVID hotel, the guards would actually sign off
on an attendance, training attendance register, so you'd have their name, security
licence, mobile phone and signature.

Q. Was that for every shift that they attended?

5 A. Certainly they had to have done that before they started their first shift. And then
it was just a matter of just retrain, retrain. So we'd encourage them while they're
waiting, before they go up onto the floor, to just attend another meeting. Sometimes
I would arrange for the team leader nursing to conduct those particular training
sessions, especially for first-timers. So even if the supervisor or floor guard manager
gave a training session, we'd identify who was on shift for the first day and then,
throughout the day, arrange for them to come down and have a direct meeting with
10 the team leader nursing.

Q. That's something like a private tutorial?

15 A. Yes. The head nurse was keen to have numbers of between four and eight, so as
to make it a bit more dynamic, and the nurse would ask questions of the guards. It
wasn't just a matter of showing them. The nurse would actually ask a question, for
example, "Why do we hand sanitise?" or "Why do we take our mask off first and
then hand sanitise?" So it was a very interactive training session.

20 Q. And did you attend any of those training sessions yourself?

A. Yes, I attended as many as I could.

25 Q. And did you find them useful?

A. Very useful. And I'll just add, if you wouldn't mind, there was a difference with
the COVID hotel, in that occasionally a guard would have to actually wear full PPE,
which requires the addition of a gown and gloves and a face shield as well as the
mask.

30 Q. And was that something that the guards were trained in how to use it, why they're
using it, how to put it on, how to take it off, those type of things?

35 A. Yes, very much. That's where the team leader nurse came in and really put that --
- there was only a handful of guards that would ever have to do it but everyone was
taught it.

40 Q. And as far as those small meetings taken by the charge nurse were concerned, did
that just cover PPE or was there broader considerations as to infection control and
understanding why we're doing what we're doing with PPE?

A. Yes, it was --- yes, the nurse would elaborate where she felt that maybe a guard
wasn't quite understanding why we do certain things or the reasons behind them.

45 Q. Okay. And these sessions, these private tutorials and the toolbox meetings that
you're talking about at the COVID hotel, they're in addition to extra training that was
required before you even got to the hotel, weren't they?

A. Yes, that's correct.

5 Q. You've described the induction process at the COVID hotel as "very strict".

A. Yes, it was.

Q. What do you mean by that?

10 A. At a minimum, the certificate I spoke about before, which was a government certificate, that was implemented into the COVID hotel as having to be something that the guards did before they got there. Then the certificate, they would take a screenshot of and then send that through to the supervisor or myself as proof of currency that they've done that course.

15

Q. You talked about, at paragraph 38 of your statement:

Prior to starting a shift at the hotel, security guards were required to do a 2-hour online course.

20

A. Yes, that was --

Q. Is that the course you're talking about or is that another course?

25 A. No, this is another course. It's more in line with what's common at mine sites and the like, whereby you register, you do different parts of the online induction and as you travel through the induction process, you get given certificates. And then you've got a little wheel which shows you in percentage terms just how far in the induction course you're going and how many units you've passed. And then once you hit 100,
30 same thing, the guards would send a screenshot to either myself or the floor supervisor, and then they were current.

30

Q. And that meant that they were then qualified and could take up some shifts there; is that right?

35

A. Yes, yes.

Q. And then when they would attend for their first shift, they would have the toolbox meeting?

40

A. Yes.

Q. And be identified as people working their first shift and attract more attention for that private tutorial type involvement with the charge nurse?

45

A. Very much so.

5 Q. You also identify in your statement that at the COVID hotel you recognised that there were issues with online courses, such as people could have someone else sit in front of the computer and complete it for them, but you put into process some steps to make sure that that didn't happen or that those people were identified. Can you just describe that?

10 A. Yes, that's correct. So just even watching the toolbox meeting, you could pick up expressions on people's faces maybe that they just didn't understand or they'd give a funny look as to, you know --- but then certainly I would ask a question or the floor supervisor would ask a question and then we'd follow it up. The floor supervisor, once everyone was in their post, would then methodically go from the top floor down and have a chat with the guards and just find out more about their understanding and if they felt comfortable, and any queries, and then to arrange that session, small group session, with the team leader nursing.

15 Q. Would you be able to make any observations in a broad sense about differences in the culture at the COVID hotel versus the Pullman Hotel? Would you say that was there a difference in the rigour that was being applied in respect of all these issues or was it similar?

20 A. It was similar, as far as everyone took it very, very seriously and you couldn't make a mistake. The Pullman, if you made a mistake --- Wilsons were quite strict and very authoritarian, which is one way of running the operation, whereas the COVID hotel, given that it was run by Alfred Health, they were a bit more, "Well, that's okay, we'll just keep training, keep relearning." So it was a bit more of a, I guess, nursing approach to instilling PPE requirements and procedures with the guards. Whereas Pullman, pretty much if you got it wrong once, you didn't get another shift.

30 Q. You've described infection control at the COVID hotel, as we referred earlier, to like a hospital ward. You also have said at paragraph 45 that anyone entering was temperature checked.

35 A. That's right.

Q. Was that something that existed at the COVID hotel but not at the Pullman?

A. That's correct.

40 Q. So that was people arriving into the hotel, temperature checks?

A. Yes, every single person.

45 Q. Whether they're a security guard, a nurse, a hotel employee, DHHS?

A. That's correct. Everybody.

Q. And you've also described that process as being methodical and regimented. "Army-like" is the phrase you used.

A. Yes, that's correct.

5

Q. Very strict?

A. Yes, very strict. And it didn't matter who you were in the chain of command or the pecking order, so to speak. When you arrived at the hotel, you were told to wait at the front; it was glass doors, so that everyone was visible. So they just had to wait. Could have been a guard coming on, could have been a cleaner, could have been an AO; didn't matter their authority or what have you. It's just as the people arrived, that's how be dealt with them. We could only do one at a time.

10

15 So we'd call one person into the foyer, temperature-check them, ask them to hand sanitise. Then we'd read through the Alfred Health list of, you know, "Have you been in touch with someone who has COVID?", "Have you been overseas in the last 14 days?", et cetera. We'd go through that process. And then they were free to sign on and put down their temperature as part of the sign-on.

20

Q. You've also identified in your statement that at the COVID hotel at least, there were designated green zones and red zones.

A. That's correct.

25

Q. Can you explain to us what those differences were?

A. Green zone is where, for example, on the mezzanine floor, you couldn't be wearing a mask on that floor, you had to have disposed of the mask prior to entering that whole floor. So that everyone could be comfortable knowing that there isn't someone that's got a surgical mask on that's potentially got COVID or, you know, they haven't hand sanitised their hands prior to entering that area, which was of the utmost importance.

30

35 I will say that there was a difference between the Pullman and the COVID hotel, being that it was deemed by various infection control experts and consultants that guards didn't have to wear gloves because they were giving guards a false sense of security. Whereas the procedure at the COVID was you had to just hand sanitise constantly. It was just pretty much if you touched any surface, you then hand sanitised.

40

Q. You've described earlier in your evidence that guards were sent on the floor at the Pullman with a mask and a set of gloves.

A. That's right.

45

Q. And they would have to use them as you've described. But guards were not

wearing gloves at the COVID hotel?

A. No, they weren't required to.

5 Q. And it was explained to you that the reason for that was what?

A. That it was deemed that a guard or a person that was wearing gloves, it gave them a false sense of security that they couldn't get COVID. Whereas in actual fact that
10 their gloves all day and get COVID on it at any point and then walk around thinking everything's fine, and they're actually spreading it, or if they were to rub their nose or rub their eye. So it was deemed that there was so much hand sanitiser around, they actually brought in the automatic ones at a certain point, about 30 of them. So you
15 basically, like I said, if you touched something, straight back to the hand sanitiser.

Q. Okay. I was asking about green and red zones at the COVID hotel. Were there designated green and red zones at the Pullman as well?

A. Yes. All the food preparation area, yes, there were designated green zones. The
20 security room, the briefing area in the foyer, that whole floor was a green zone. So, yes, it was a similar situation.

Q. And were the requirements for the green and red zones at the Pullman the same as the requirements of the green and red zones at the COVID hotel?

A. They were quite similar. But the thing with the COVID hotel, it had a lot of
25 nurses there checking on the patients. So there was a greater number of nurses and they were all getting around in full PPE. So it was --- that's why it resembled a hospital ward. It was very, very serious as far as --- and because it was quite
30 a smaller venue, everything was very much, you were right there in the middle of it. So social distancing was paramount. You had to avoid being in a small lift lobby. And if that meant waiting around the corner till the lift came and went, then so be it.

Q. And that seemed to be the culture of the place, everyone was adhering to those
35 types of requirements?

A. 100 per cent, and everyone was looking out for each other as well. A nurse might
40 politely say, "Your mask is not quite fitting properly over your nose." So they would offer advice. It was very much we're all in this and we're all looking out for each other. There were some with more experience in infection control than others, so no-one was made to feel silly or out of place. It was just a matter of, "No, that's fine. Do it this way" or "Do it that way." Even the nurses were the same. When they were doffing their PPE, they would help each other out. So, yes, people were just
45 constantly reminding each other of the procedures.

Q. And those procedures were constantly then reinforced not only by that reminder but by the way things were being done across the hotel?

A. Yes, that's right, yes.

Q. Including patient transfers that had to come in and out via that lobby --

5

A. Yes.

Q. --- is that right? And you describe in your statement at paragraph 59 things called "Code Red". Can you explain to us what a code red was and what would trigger it and what would happen as a result?

10

A. The trigger is essentially a guest arriving or leaving, because they had to arrive and leave through that foyer area where all of the hotel's business was also arriving and carrying on. So when a patient transport or an ambulance pulled up out the front of the building, one of the guards in the foyer, which is where I was stationed predominantly, would do what we called a one-point contact. So one guard would go out, ask the ambulance, you know, who they were here for or who they were dropping off. That information would be recorded. The guard would go upstairs, inform DHHS, the AO and team leader nursing, then they put their procedures in place to have the nurses get all their PPE on, come down and either greet the guest coming in or, reversingly, they would go up to the room and bring the guest out to the ambulance. So during that process, the whole foyer area, no-one could be in the area, and it was --- that was what we called a code red.

15

20

25

Q. Guards would stop people out on the street from walking across the part of the footpath between the entry to the hotel and where the ambulance or patient transfer was?

30

A. Yes, that was correct. And the public were very understanding. I mean, it was pretty obvious, you've got an ambulance in front of a building, you generally don't go near it. So it was just a matter of politely asking them, if they were coming up that part of the street, just to cross over to the other side.

35

Q. And then once the person had been transferred, going across that lobby and into the patient transfer, there were then cleaners that would go through the lobby, were there?

40

A. Yes, they would start with touchpoints. And the cleaners were in full PPE, gowns. So they would start with touchpoints and then work their way back through to the lift area by doing the floors with a solution. But yes, they would --- once they gave myself or whoever was what we call a spotter would then give the thumbs' up that the security guards out on the street could come in, that the hotel staff could re-open the foyer and everything could continue from there.

45

Q. So that whole process sounds quite involved. How long would that whole process from, say, the patient transfer arriving through to when the foyer could re-open, how long?

A. Approximately 30 minutes, at a minimum.

Q. To get one person out or one person in?

5

A. Yes, that's right. And sometimes we'd have two ambulances out the front, for example, so two lots of guests coming in, and that process would have to be done between the two guests. We couldn't bring two lots of guests in on the same code red. We had to go back to code green, which is clean floors, et cetera, and then bring in the second patients or guests.

10

Q. Okay. Could I ask you specifically about masks. We've touched upon gloves and I think you've even said that the guards at the COVID hotel were required to wear glasses at all times. Did I understand that correctly?

15

A. Yes, that's correct.

Q. So, masks. You detailed at paragraph 54 that the requirement around masks was very strict, including the requirement that all guards be clean-shaven.

20

A. That's correct.

Q. Can you explain that a bit more to us?

25

A. That's quite simply the fitting of a surgical mask can't be accomplished if you have a beard. It's quite similar to firefighting whereby the breathing apparatus --- firefighters can't have beards to wear breathing apparatus to go fight fires, because you don't get a seal.

30

Q. Right. And there was a requirement in relation to the amount of time that someone was allowed to wear a mask at the COVID hotel?

A. Yes, that's right.

35

Q. And what was that and who told you about that requirement?

A. That was coming from the Alfred. So that was an --- not so much infection control, but there were found to be inadequacies with a guard wearing the same mask for an extended period. And it wasn't to do with COVID, it was more to do with that guard breathing their own breath into the mask, and then the potential for infection of another kind, not COVID.

40

Q. Right. So they had to be changed over how frequently?

45

A. We were doing every four hours.

Q. And you say that there was also a requirement at the COVID hotel, paragraph 56,

that once a mask comes off, it had to go in the bin.

A. Yes, 100 per cent.

5 Q. And:

We were always told to 'treat our masks as COVID'.

A. Correct.

10

Q. Can you explain that a little bit more?

15

A. It's quite simply that. As soon as your mask came off, the hand that was removing the mask or the strap, it was deemed to have COVID on your hand and that the actual mask was COVID-positive, and then that had to go straight into the infection control bin, and then straightaway before you touched anything, you had to hand sanitise your hands. And then you'd get into the lift to come down to your break or whatever the thing was. But the mask, 100 per cent, you couldn't touch it without hand sanitisation.

20

Q. And that was the situation at the COVID hotel?

A. Yes.

25

Q. Was that a new bit of information to you when you got to the COVID hotel or was that the same at the Pullman?

30

A. Same at the Pullman. So when you --- you know, I outlined earlier, if there was a guest going on a fresh air break, the two guards on the floor would have to don their mask. And then, yes, as soon as the patient had cleared the floor or were back in their rooms, those masks had to go into the bin and then hand sanitisation. So it was the exact same procedure at the COVID. It was just a bit more --- there was a lot more movement at the COVID. The quarantine hotel, once the guests were at their room, that was it. Whereas here at the COVID hotel, we'd have 10, 15 people arrive, maybe six or seven leave in one day, in one shift. So the amount of PPE we went through was astronomical. But it was, yes, very, very different, it was a very, very busy hotel.

35

Q. You talk about, at paragraph 52, that time being a stressful time.

40

A. Yes. When you've got a hotel full of COVID people, families, you know, with little ones, elderly people that were having to be separated from --- you might have a mother and son coming back from overseas and the mother's quite elderly and then she has to go into a separate room to her son, those sorts of things. Or there was one example where a young girl had infected her grandmother and then was feeling the guilt of having made her grandmother sick. So those sorts of things are never easy to watch or be a part of.

45

Q. You detailed that dealing with these patients was taking an emotional toll.

5 A. It wasn't so much taking an emotional toll as far as depleting you. It was just it wasn't your average job that any security guard would have expected they would be doing.

10 Q. Yes. You indicated before, at the outset, that you'd worked in a number of stressful roles in security systems and firefighting and the like.

A. Yes.

15 Q. As far as the stress of this job, how would you rate that in comparison to those other roles that you have fulfilled?

20 A. Because the COVID hotel, as I said before, there was a lot of nurses, a lot of DHHS staff, they were all there to care for the guests; they don't just see it as a job. So that, as far as being in a stressful environment, it was a much more warm --- there was no panic at all ever. So everyone was professional, and all --- like I said, even before --- we were looking out for each other, for other staff members. So that side of it, you know, I can't compare it to firefighting or whatever, where it's, you know, just pandemonium. So it was a very, very good environment.

25 MR IHLE: Thank you, sir. That covers the questions I had for you.

30 Can I indicate, Madam Chair, that there's been late communications by one of the parties in respect of this witness and there's one matter that I just need to have five minutes with that counsel to deal with. Perhaps if we can stand down for five minutes.

MR CRAIG SC: I think if my learned friend checks his email, he might find that the need for the communication has dissipated.

35 MR IHLE: Okay. With that indication, that sounds like that's the only questions there are for this witness.

40 DR HANSCOMBE QC: Madam Chair, might I say, I communicated last night with Mr Ihle, we don't seek to cross-examine this witness, but we are collating documents that will assist the Inquiry, I think, to understand some of the context of the evidence concerning Corrections Victoria, if it please the Board.

CHAIR: Thank you, Dr Hanscombe.

45 MR CRAIG SC: Madam Chair, can I indicate my communication was intended to remove, I think, one question my learned friend had raised with me. I still have an application to examine this witness. Can I indicate the topics of that examination?

CHAIR: Yes.

5 MR CRAIG SC: Thank you. The witness gave evidence as to the running of the Pullman, which wasn't evidence in the witness's statement, and I'd like leave just to ask a short number of questions about that. Second, the witness expanded upon his evidence as to training in a way not previously contained in the statement, and I'd like again leave to ask a short number of questions about that. And then the third topic is paragraph 23 of the witness' statement; and the fourth topic, paragraph 24, which I've previously provided notice of to my learned friend.

10 MR IHLE: Madam Chair, they're the matters to which I was alluding when I said perhaps five minutes because, whilst I appreciate my learned friend has withdrawn his original application in respect of one, I had enquired as to the second and heard nothing back. So perhaps five minutes would be appropriate.

15 CHAIR: All right. I'll stand the matter down for five minutes whilst that's being discussed and resolved. So I'll go out of the hearing room.

20 MR IHLE: As the Board pleases.

ADJOURNED [11.56 AM]

25 **RESUMED** [12.03 PM]

CHAIR: Yes, Mr Ihle, ready to resume?

30 MR IHLE: Yes, Madam Chair. I understand there are those five matters that Mr Craig has identified and I would not oppose leave being granted.

CHAIR: That being the case, Mr Craig, leave is granted unopposed for you to put your matters to this witness.

35 MR CRAIG SC: Madam Chair, I'm afraid my audio just dropped out and I only caught the very last bit of what you said, the granting of leave unopposed. Can I proceed to put my questions?

40 CHAIR: Yes, Mr Craig. I just confirmed that Mr Ihle had communicated that he's not opposing any part of the application that you're making for leave to cross-examine and, it being unopposed and you identifying the areas that you wish to go to, that leave is granted.

45 MR CRAIG SC: Thank you, Madam Chair.

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR CRAIG SC

MR CRAIG SC: Sir, can you see and hear me?

5

The witness is on mute.

SECURITY 2: Okay. How's that?

10 MR CRAIG SC: That's better. Thank you.

Sir, you were asked a question by Mr Ihle, "Who was the Pullman run by?" Do you recall being asked that question?

15 A. Yes, I do.

Q. And you answered, "Wilson."

A. The security side of it, yes.

20

Q. Yes?

A. Yes.

25 Q. Who did you understand was in charge of quarantine at the hotel?

A. DHHS.

Q. Thank you. And how was that communicated to you?

30

A. On the whiteboard at the toolbox meetings, that was communicated by the Wilson supervisor, that DHHS were the ultimate authority, as is the authorised officer.

Q. Thank you.

35

Could the witness please be shown Exhibit 25. Perhaps I might come back to that, Madam Chair, whilst the operator is locating Exhibit 25.

CHAIR: Thank you.

40

MR CRAIG SC: Oh, here we go.

CHAIR: Here it comes.

45 MR CRAIG SC: Yes. Sir, could you please look at this document and see whether you recognise it?

A. Yes, I do recognise that document.

Q. And where have you seen it before?

5 A. It was in the security room and put on walls at various points in the hotel.

Q. Thank you. Could you read the first sentence to yourself. Was that also a source of your understanding?

10 A. Yes, it most certainly was.

Q. Thank you. The next topic I'd like to ask you about is your training.

A. Yes.

15

Q. As I understand it, in respect of your work at the Pullman Hotel, you undertook a toolbox talk in detail with the site supervisor at the beginning of each shift; is that correct?

20 A. That's correct.

Q. There were also daily briefings in the security room; is that correct?

A. Yes, that's correct.

25

Q. And in those daily briefings you were reminded of your core duties?

A. That's correct.

30 Q. And reminded of the core duties and the standard operating procedure?

A. Correct.

35 Q. And you were also able to access information posted to the walls on various printouts; is that correct?

A. Yes, various laminated printouts on hand hygiene, how to wash your hands and the like.

40 Q. Thank you.

Could the witness please be shown Exhibit 26. If I move on, the document will come up. Whilst it's coming up, I'll ask you about another feature of your training, sir.

45

A. Certainly.

Q. In addition to the training, the toolbox training, the daily briefings and the posting of material on the walls, Wilson Security staff also checked from time to time with guards that they understood their duties and the COVID guidelines; is that correct?

5 A. Yes, that's very much correct. If it wasn't the supervisor, it would be the floor relievers would emphasise different procedures and ensure that the guards understood those procedures.

10 Q. Thank you. Now, you talked about directions and sheets of paper stuck to the walls. What I'd ask the operator to do is slowly scroll through this document, Exhibit 26, and I'll ask you if you recognise this as being one such document.

A. Yes, I recognise that. Yes, they're certainly the documents that were on the walls.

15 Q. Thank you. Now, this exhibit contains information as at March 2020 and June 2020. If the operator keeps scrolling through to the document for June 2020, I'll tell the operator when to stop. Yes, if you go onto the next page, operator, and if you enlarge the "PPE required" section of the document.

20 You will see there, sir, that by June 2020, the directions provided that gloves were mandatory for walks and check-in, but were in the "accessible always" category --- that is, not mandatory --- outside those categories. Was that your understanding?

A. Yes, that was.

25

Q. Thank you.

A. You had to carry the gloves with you but you didn't actually need to wear them if you were able to keep social distance from --

30

Q. Thank you very much.

A. Yes.

35 Q. The next document I'd like to show you is at WILS.0001.0003.2697.

A. Right.

Q. And can I ask you to take a moment to see whether you recognise this document.

40

A. Yes. Yes, I've read that. Yes.

Q. Thank you. And if we scroll down to I think the third page --- sorry, one more page, Mr Operator --- you will see there there's a statement:

45

All staff are to complete the following Government information and training link.

Do you see that?

A. Yes, I do.

5

Q. And to keep a certificate on your phone to say that such training has been completed. Do you see that?

A. I do see that, yes.

10

Q. That was the Commonwealth Government's infection control training module, wasn't it?

A. I'd have to click on the link.

15

Q. But you did complete that training, didn't you?

A. I would have at some point.

20

Q. So insofar as it might be suggested that Wilson did not require security staff to complete this training module and retain evidence of completing that training module, that would be incorrect, wouldn't it?

25

A. Having read this document, yes, you are correct in saying that I --- yes, my statement's not correct.

Q. Thank you, sir. Can I now take you to paragraph 23 of your statement.

A. Yes.

30

Q. You refer to the toolbox meetings occurring in the foyer of the hotel. Do you recall that evidence?

A. Yes, and I'm looking at my statement.

35

Q. And you gave evidence that there was just enough space to ensure social distancing. Do you recall that?

A. Yes, during the busy periods.

40

Q. And that the supervisor made sure everyone was distanced in a C?

A. Yes, for the meetings.

45

Q. Yes.

A. Yes, they were very strict on, you know, people may be looking to breach social

distancing just inadvertently, so --

Q. And so --

5 A. Yes?

Q. Sorry, keep going. I interrupted.

10 A. That's all right. I think I mentioned in my statement that the supervisors were very direct, so there was no room for complacency, especially when you've got that many people all in the area.

15 Q. Thank you. And so your evidence to the Inquiry is that the supervisors were conscious of social distancing, vigilant to enforce it?

A. Yes.

20 Q. Were you aware that the space allocated to security by the Department and hotel for the purposes of such meetings was in the Mercure Hotel and insufficient for that purpose?

25 A. I wasn't --- the Mercure Hotel, I wasn't involved with any of their activities at all. I can only comment on the Pullman activities, other than to say that there was an adjoining area which I'll call the foyer between the two security rooms, one security room for the Pullman and the other security room was for the Mercure.

Q. Thank you. The final thing I wanted to ask you about was shift changeovers.

30 A. Yes.

Q. And you used the phrase "treated like cattle". Do you recall using that phrase?

A. Yes, and I did say to Mr Ihle that that's probably a bit harsh, a harsh description.

35 Q. Yes. And it's a harsh description because everyone involved with shift changeover needed to be vigilant to ensure it happened quickly, to avoid any risks of contamination and to maintain, as far as possible, social distancing?

40 A. Yes, that's correct, and also to reduce the noise level so that people could effectively hear communications that were being carried out on shift changeover.

Q. Yes. So in those circumstances, the normal pleasantries weren't possible and it was important to get straight into business, wasn't it?

45 A. That's 100 per cent correct.

MR CRAIG SC: Thank you, sir. I'm very grateful for your time.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Craig.

5

No other questions from any of the parties with leave to appear?

MR IHLE: Not that I've heard from, Madam Chair.

10

There is one matter arising from that cross-examination that I do seek to clarify.

CHAIR: Yes.

15

MR CRAIG SC: Sorry, before my learned friend does that --- and I apologise to Counsel Assisting --- I probably should tender WILS.0001.0003.2697.

CHAIR: No objection, Mr Ihle?

20

MR IHLE: No, Madam Chair.

MR CRAIG SC: I'm indebted to my learned friend.

CHAIR: Exhibit 030.

25

EXHIBIT #030 - DOCUMENT WILS.0001.0003.2697

RE-EXAMINATION BY MR IHLE

30

MR IHLE: Sir, I just want to ask you a question about you being taken to that document which indicated that the Department of Health --- that is the Commonwealth Department of Health --- online training was required of you by Wilson and your correction as to your statement in that respect.

35

A. Yes.

Q. I just want to take you back to come questions I asked you earlier and see, in light of what Mr Craig took you to, whether it changes that evidence as well. You will recall that I asked you about the training that you did online, and indeed in your statement you have provided the internet address of where the training you did online was.

40

45 A. Yes.

Q. And I asked you this question, and you gave this answer:

When did you do that course?

Answer:

5

It would have been in the first week of being there, the first couple of days.

A. Yes.

10 Q. Is that an accurate answer?

A. Yes. The link that I've provided wasn't an official --- it was just something that I'd chosen to do. It wasn't directed by anyone to do it per se, certainly not by, you know, written correspondence.

15

Q. Okay. And then I asked you the very next question:

So it was actually after you'd started working at the Pullman, was it?

20 And you answered:

Yes, that's right.

Is that a truthful answer?

25

A. Yes, it is.

Q. And then I asked you:

30 *Did you do it whilst you were working or did you do it in your spare time?*

And you answered:

35 *I logged on while I was at work and completed it at home on my personal computer.*

Was that a truthful answer?

A. Yes, it is.

40

MR IHLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have no further questions.

CHAIR: Thanks, Mr Ihle.

45 Thank you, sir. Thank you for your attendance at the Inquiry, and you're now excused. You're able to mute yourself.

Dr Hanscombe, did you want to say something before this witness is excused?

DR HANSCOMBE QC: No, I simply seek that Ms Tiplady and I might be excused henceforth.

5

CHAIR: Yes. Thank you, Dr Hanscombe. You and your junior are excused.

DR HANSCOMBE QC: Thank you, Madam Chair.

10 WITNESS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW

15

CHAIR: Mr Ihle, are we in a position to move to the next witness or do we need a short break to make that arrangement?

MR IHLE: I'm just making that enquiry. No, I'm told that he is here and ready to go.

20

CHAIR: All right. Thank you.

Now, this witness, as I understand it, Mr Ihle, is being referred to as G16; is that correct?

25

MR IHLE: That's so. And there are suppression orders that have been made in relation to his evidence and any evidence that may tend to identify him, including his image.

30 CHAIR: All right. Witness, are you able to hear us now?

MR IHLE: It appears he's on mute.

35 CHAIR: Yes. Sir, I think your microphone is on mute at the moment. Could you unmute yourself? Thank you. Are you able to hear me now?

G16: Yes, I've done that. Yes, I can hear you.

40 CHAIR: Good. Thank you. Sir, I understand that for the purposes of you giving your evidence that you wish to take the affirmation, your promise to tell the truth. For that reason now I'll hand you to my associate, who will take you through that process.

Thank you, Madam Associate.

45

G16, AFFIRMED

CHAIR: Yes. Thank you, sir. I'll pass you over to Mr Ihle now who will take you through your evidence.

5

Thanks, Mr Ihle.

MR IHLE: Thanks, Madam Chair.

10

EXAMINATION BY MR IHLE

MR IHLE: Witness, can you hear me okay?

15

A. Yes, I can hear you.

Q. Excellent. You have provided a statement to the Inquiry dated 18 August this year; is that right?

20

A. Yes.

Q. And that statement is 13 pages long and has 102 paragraphs in it?

25

A. Yes.

Q. And before I go to the contents of that statement, first of all, your name is known to the staff of the Inquiry, is that right, as are your contact details?

30

A. Yes. Yes, it is.

Q. Now, that statement to which I've just referred, are the contents of that statement truthful?

35

A. Yes.

Q. Are the contents of that statement accurate?

A. Yes.

40

MR IHLE: I tender the statement.

CHAIR: Exhibit 031.

45

EXHIBIT #031 - STATEMENT OF SECURITY 16

MR IHLE: Now, sir, you will appreciate that there are parts of that statement that have been redacted or replaced with more general descriptions so as to preserve your identity.

5

A. Yes.

Q. As have names concerning other people so as to preserve their identities as well. Do you understand that?

10

A. Yes.

Q. Yes. So if in giving your evidence we can avoid using names or specific dates, we'll do that. Okay?

15

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. So just dealing firstly with your experience. You're a licensed security guard; is that the case?

20

A. Yes.

Q. And as of around April of this year, you have been licensed for about two years as a security guard?

25

A. Yes.

Q. What training did you have to do to obtain your licence?

30

A. For the security certificate I had to do a 17-day course for the security guards that we need to do.

Q. Yes. And what level licence did you obtain as a result of that course?

35

A. Security entry level, level 2.

Q. Level 2, the entry level?

40

A. Yes, yes.

Q. Now, other than doing the training to obtain your level 2 licence, have you done any other training to be a security guard?

45

A. No.

Q. Have you done any other training in order to fulfil your job roles as a security guard?

A. Yes. Like if you go to some other places, like a shopping centre or in a hospital, you have to do training in that to get acclimated to the situations.

5 Q. Yes. So turning specifically to the Hotel Quarantine Program, you worked at three different hotels during the quarantine program?

A. Yes.

10 Q. Did you have to undertake any further training in order to undertake --- to do that work?

A. No.

15 Q. You worked firstly from mid-April to mid-May at the Marriott Hotel?

A. Yes.

20 Q. And during that same period, that is mid-April to mid-May, you also worked at the Novotel?

A. Yes.

25 Q. And from mid-May to late May you worked at the Rydges in Swanston Street, Carlton?

A. Yes.

30 Q. Now, those two stints, if we call it that --- mid-April to mid-May when you worked at the Marriott and Novotel, and the second stint being the period at Rydges -- you worked through different organisations, didn't you?

A. Yes, different subcontractors.

35 Q. Yes, okay. So let's turn firstly to that first period, the period at which you worked at the Marriott Hotel and undertook two shifts at the Novotel.

A. Okay.

40 Q. What was the organisation that was the contractor that engaged you for that work?

A. It was Silvans Security Pty Ltd.

45 Q. Silvans Security Pty Ltd, is it?

A. Yes, Pty Ltd.

Q. And how many shifts during that period would you work, on average, during a week?

A. Four to five shifts a week.

5

Q. And how did you first get that work?

A. One of my friends that worked at that company knew me and I contacted him. That's how I got the work, contacted the person in charge.

10

Q. How did you contact the person at Silvans Security?

A. I gave him a call and then left him a message, and then he replied back ---

15 Q. Okay. In your statement, you say that there was --

A. --- on WhatsApp.

Q. Sorry, say that again?

20

A. On WhatsApp. Like, I left him a message on WhatsApp.

Q. On WhatsApp?

25 A. Yes.

Q. Okay. And you set out at paragraph 12 the message that you received in response from that person.

30 A. Yes.

Q. Did you understand that to be a message addressed only to you or as a group message?

35 A. I think it has been sent to every person who is starting over there.

Q. And during --

A. It's just me like --

40

Q. Sorry, say that again?

A. It's just me, I think. And then if someone is starting new, he would send that same message to the other person as well.

45

Q. Okay. During your communications with the person at Silvans Security, was there ever any discussion about further training that you needed to do?

A. No.

5 Q. Were you ever directed to do anything online in respect of COVID or infection control?

A. No.

10 Q. And from the date on which you first made contact with Silvans Security, how long was it before you first got a shift?

A. By next day.

15 Q. The next day?

A. Just one day. Like, I contacted him, I suppose on Thursday and then I got a shift on Friday. Just one day.

20 Q. Okay. And the arrangements that were made for your shift, where you were to go, what you were to do, how were they communicated to you?

A. On WhatsApp. They gave me the name of the hotel and the address, like a Google photo of the address, so I'd see the address and go there. On WhatsApp.

25 Q. Were you then subsequently given rosters as well?

A. It was like --- yes, a week before he would give us shifts or rosters for a whole week, like, "You're working on these days."

30 Q. And would that roster that you would be sent only be sent to you or would it be sent to other people as well?

35 A. Yes, that roster, it's specifically to me. And then after --- and on each date, he would just tell us, like, "The morning shift is covered by these all people and the evening shift is covered by these all people." That's the process.

40 Q. You say at paragraph 46 of your statement that you could see, from seeing the rosters and talking to other guards, you know that some security guards were doing seven shifts per week at the Marriott Hotel.

A. Yes.

45 Q. First of all, let's just look at the rosters. Could you see who else was being rostered on when?

A. Yes.

Q. And you --

5 A. Not on the rosters. But like the list, he would put every day which guard is working in the morning and which guard is working in the evening. You could see like who is the same person working seven days a week.

Q. Okay. And so you saw that on the lists that were being sent, but you also had discussions with some of the other guards --

10 A. Yes.

Q. --- and that indicated to you that there were some working seven shifts per week?

15 A. Yes, I had some discussions with the guards from different subcontractors and they were telling me like all the shifts they were working straightaway.

Q. Okay. And how long were the shifts?

20 A. 12 hours.

Q. And did you, as a result of your discussions with guards, also discover that some of them were working other jobs as well as the security at hotel quarantine?

25 A. Yes, some people were.

Q. And where were the types of places they were working?

A. I don't know. I didn't ask them.

30 Q. Okay. Were you yourself working at another place whilst doing hotel quarantine security?

35 A. Yes. Yes, I was covering four to five shifts in the hotel and a couple of shifts in a warehouse.

Q. A couple of shifts in a ware ---

A. [indistinct]

40 Q. Each week?

A. Yes, each week [indistinct].

45 Q. And do I understand correctly from your statement that you also did food delivery as well?

A. Not during that time.

Q. Okay. Not during the time at the Marriott Hotel?

A. Yes.

5

Q. Did anyone ever say to you that you should not be working anywhere else other than at hotel quarantine?

A. No.

10

Q. When we look at the work that you did for Silvans Security --- that is, the work at the Marriott Hotel and at the Novotel --- how was it that you were paid?

A. He put payment in my bank account on ABN.

15

Q. What does that mean, he'd pay you on ABN?

A. Yes, he asked me for my ABN account. So we would send him the invoices, like which shifts we have covered, and the \$26, like the total pay --- we would send him the invoice and then he would pay us into the bank account.

20

Q. Okay. So you would send an invoice to Silvans Security for the work that you'd done?

A. Yes.

25

Q. And that would then be paid into your account?

A. Yes, [indistinct], yes.

30

Q. And how much were you paid per hour?

A. \$26.

35

Q. Did you ever meet the person at Silvans Security face to face?

A. There was one day, like, when I started there in Marriott.

Q. Okay. And in your past experience in the security industry, have you ever had another occasion where you've been given a shift without first meeting the person?

40

A. Yes, yes, a couple of times.

Q. That does happen?

45

A. Yes.

Q. And what about paperwork? Do you ever have to provide paperwork or did you have to provide paperwork to Silvans Security before getting your first shift?

5 A. Usually we have to provide paperwork. But with Silvans Security, no, when we had to join team, no.

10 Q. Okay. And when you were working at the Marriott and the Novotel, you were engaged by Silvans Security. Do you know who was in charge of the security at those hotels?

A. Another company, Unified Security.

Q. And how did you know that they were in charge?

15 A. Because they were wearing the vest for the company name and --- yes. When you go there, you find out, people are wearing the vest.

Q. Okay.

20 A. Yes. And in the message as well, it was saying it's like Unified Security, "Our client is Unified Security."

Q. The client was Unified Security, okay.

25 A. Yes.

CHAIR: Sorry, could I just get the witness to just repeat that? "It was saying it's like Unified Security." Who was "it"?

30 A. In the paragraph number 12, you can see the message I got from the contractor.

CHAIR: I see. So it's the message that was saying it was from Unified Security?

35 A. Yes.

CHAIR: Thank you.

A. Yes, and the people are wearing the vest.

40 MR IHLE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Sir, if I use the term "PPE", do you know what I'm talking about?

45 A. Yes.

Q. I want you to focus on PPE during the time that you were at the Marriott and the Novotel. Were the requirements around PPE during that period, when you were

working at the Marriott and the Novotel, did they change at all or were they the same throughout?

A. Same throughout.

5

Q. What PPE were you provided with?

A. Masks and gloves.

10 Q. And how many masks and how many gloves would you be given for each shift?

A. Each shift, just one mask and gloves, one pair of mask and gloves.

Q. And were you told in any way how you were meant to use them?

15

A. Well, on the first day, I don't remember exactly that I was given any instructions, but on each day there was no instructions given for the mask and gloves.

Q. Were you told when you were meant to wear them and when you weren't meant to wear them?

20

A. Yes. On each floor, we have to wear the masks, like where we were working. And if we go to break, there was a break room, like in the lobby, then we had to take the masks and gloves off and then go there.

25

Q. You took them off --

A. We are going from --

30 Q. Sorry, I spoke over you there. So if you go on a break, there was a break room in the lobby and you had to take the masks and gloves off to go there?

A. Yes. It was a green zone.

35 Q. Were you told what to do with the masks and gloves when you took them off?

A. Yes, just put them in the pocket.

Q. Just put them in your pocket?

40

A. Yes, before going to the lobby.

Q. And when you come back from your break, what do you do with the masks and gloves?

45

A. Put them back on.

Q. The ones from your pocket?

A. Yes.

5 Q. After a while you stopped working for Silvans Security and you took up another role in hotel quarantine at the Rydges Hotel; is that right?

A. Yes.

10 Q. And who was the contractor that engaged you at the Rydges Hotel?

A. It was SSG Security and the contractor name was [REDACTED].

Q. Okay. We're avoiding using names where possible.

15

A. Yes. Sorry.

MR IHLE: Perhaps just for the purposes of transmission, Madam Board, we will note that that name should be redacted consistently with the statement.

20

A. Yes. It was SSG Security.

Q. And how did you get into contact with SSG Security and start working with them?

25

A. So one of my friends used to work with him, and I asked him for the contact number and I put him a text message. I give him a call but he didn't pick the call up, so I put him a message that I was looking for shifts, and I provided him with my security licence. And then he asked me about the availability, yes, and that's how it's

30

Q. You say you were looking for shifts, you provided him with your security licence, and he asked you something. What did he ask you?

35 A. For my availability.

Q. Your availability?

A. Yes.

40

Q. Was there any discussion at that point about any further training that was required to be done?

A. No.

45

Q. Other than your security licence, did you have to provide him with any other documentation?

A. No.

5 Q. After you'd first made contact with someone on behalf of SSG Security, how long was it before you worked your first shift with them?

A. By next day, yes. He gave me the roster for the whole week.

10 Q. So the next day he gave you the roster for the whole week?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you work that next day?

15 A. Yes.

Q. And where did you work?

20 A. Rydges on Swanston.

Q. When you attended Rydges on Swanston on that first shift, did anyone explain to you that there were people within the hotel --- that is, guests within the hotel --- who were positive cases for COVID?

25 A. No.

Q. Did you subsequently find that out?

30 A. Like, after two or three days, someone who was working there, he just --- we had a casual chat and he told me.

35 Q. Can I ask you about PPE at the Rydges Hotel. Was there any difference when you first started at Rydges between the PPE system there and what you had seen at the Marriott?

A. Yes. When I started there ---

Q. What was the difference?

40 A. When I started there, the supervisor told me there to, like, take the mask and gloves every time we'd go down on the break and like when we start. When we start, they gave us a pair of mask and gloves and when we go for each break, we had to throw the mask and gloves in the bin, in the yellow bin over there, and then come down and get a new pair of gloves and mask from downstairs to go upstairs.

45 Q. Okay. So you would wear one mask and one pair of gloves up onto the floor and then you'd throw them out when you left the floor and go on a break?

A. Yes.

5 Q. And then you'd get a new mask and a new set of gloves?

A. Yes.

Q. During the period that you were at Rydges, did that system change?

10 A. Yes.

Q. How did it change?

15 A. So after two or three days, again the supervisor told me there was a shortage of masks and gloves and, yes, and then like we start there they would just give us a pair of masks and gloves, the same as the other hotel, and, like, if you're going to the break, just put the mask into the pocket when you come down, then again use the same pair of mask and gloves to go up.

20 Q. Okay. So if I understand this, the first two or three days you were at the Rydges Hotel, it was a set of mask and gloves, but if you left the floor, throw them in the bin and get a new set when you come back?

25 A. Yes.

Q. But then, after two or three days, you were told there's a shortage of masks and gloves --

30 A. Yes.

Q. --- so use the one set of masks and gloves for your whole shift, and when you come off the floor, just put them in your pocket?

35 A. Yes.

Q. Were you given any further instructions about where you should be when you put them in your pocket?

40 A. Yes. He told me like this, "Don't do it, just don't put your masks and gloves in your pocket in front of the security camera on the floors, just be a bit aside."

Q. Sorry. He told you, "Don't put your masks and gloves in your pocket in front of the security camera on the floors, out of sight"?

45 A. Yes. Yes.

Q. Did he explain to you why he was giving you that instruction?

A. No.

Q. What did you take it to mean?

5

A. That they are --- they don't want to show the hotel staff that the company is short of gloves and masks, as far as the position for them, that they're not providing suitable, like, appropriate mask and gloves.

10 Q. Did you do what you were told?

A. Yes. [indistinct]

15 Q. Now, when you were told that you should put the mask and gloves in your pocket out of the sight of the security cameras, was that before or after you had found out that there were COVID-positive guests within the hotel?

20 A. I believe it was before. Before the --- before I found out, like, there were positive people.

Q. Okay. Now, after you found out there were positive people in the hotel, was that still the system: put them in your pocket when you go on a break?

25 A. Yes, it was the same.

Q. And still to do it out of the sight of the security cameras?

A. Yes.

30 Q. Whilst you were working at the Rydges, did you have any interactions with any of the guests there?

A. No.

35 Q. In your statement, you detail one occasion where there was a nurse testing a guest but you stood behind that nurse.

40 A. Yes. So it was not a direct interaction. A nurse came there to explain the people, explain the guests over there, that what happened if the guest was positive or what happens if it's negative.

Q. And where was the guest when the nurse was giving that explanation?

45 A. In their rooms.

Q. And where was the nurse when they were explaining it to the guests?

A. I saw a nurse going inside and outside the door. She went to the room herself, but she was wearing the full PPE kit with the gown as well. There were a couple of nurses.

5 Q. Did you go into the room?

A. No, no, we were not allowed to go in.

10 Q. Did you touch anything in the room?

A. No.

Q. Did you touch the guests?

15 A. No.

Q. And did you touch the nurse at all?

20 A. No.

Q. There's an occasion that you detail in your statement, sir, when you were working an overnight shift at the Rydges Hotel and you started to feel that you had a runny nose, a sore throat, and were coughing.

25 A. Yes.

Q. What did you think when you started to feel those symptoms?

30 A. I thought, like, it was very cold night that day, so I thought, like, it's a common cold or something. It was very cold that night. When I went on the break, I saw some people over there sniffing, and I thought it was a normal common cold.

Q. When you say you saw some people over there sniffing --

35 A. Yes.

Q. --- who were those people you saw sniffing?

40 A. In the break room, the break room we mentioned before, some security guards were sniffing, like runny nose as well.

Q. So you had a runny nose and sore throat?

45 A. Yes.

Q. And you saw some others that seemed to be having similar symptoms?

A. Yes.

Q. And as far as you're aware, had those other guards also been told to put the PPE in their pockets when they went on break?

5

A. Yes.

Q. Did you tell anyone that you were feeling unwell?

10 A. No, I didn't. I thought it's a common cold symptom.

Q. When you arrived at work for the start of that shift, were there any temperatures taken or anything like that?

15 A. No.

Q. Had anyone ever told you that if you're feeling unwell, specifically with a cough or a sore throat, that you should tell your supervisor?

20 A. No.

Q. Were you ever asked upon arrival for work at the hotel whether you had any symptoms? Did anyone ever say to you, "How are you feeling today? Do you have any symptoms?" before you started?

25

A. No, no.

Q. So how far or how long before the end of your shift was it before you first realised that you had those types of symptoms?

30

A. I think in --- like a couple, like two or three hours I was feeling runny nose was getting a bit bad, and a slight cough as well that was developing.

Q. So at the end of your shift, what did you do?

35

A. So I just straight went back home.

Q. How did you get home?

40 A. By my own car.

Q. Did anyone else go in your car with you?

45 A. No.

Q. Had anyone else come in your car on your way in to the shift?

A. No.

Q. And after you got home, what did you do then?

5 A. Just went to sleep.

Q. And then what happened?

10 A. I woke up the next morning and it was --- I didn't felt good, like it was --- I felt
some weakness in my body that's not normal. I had some medicines for cough and,
like, fever. And then after some time, I went for a walk and there was a hospital just
right next to it, and I had seen in the freeway that if you had symptoms, just get
tested. So I went to the hospital straightaway and I enquired about my friend --- to
15 my friend, he had gone to the clinic, that is, COVID clinic, like, a week before.
I asked him for the location for the COVID clinic and I went over there and got
tested.

Q. Okay. I just want to go back and deal with some of the things that you've just
said.

20

A. Yes.

Q. As I said, the shift that you first felt symptoms, that was an overnight shift; is that
right?

25

A. Yes.

Q. So it was one that started in the evening and went over midnight into the
morning?

30

A. Yes.

Q. You've described that you went home and went to bed. In your evidence before,
you said you woke up the next morning. Was it the next day or was it later in the
35 same day that you'd arrived home?

A. I finished my shift in the morning of the day.

Q. Yes.

40

A. So I went to sleep and in the afternoon of that day, I woke up.

Q. Okay. And that's when you had the medicine and went for the walk, went to the
clinic?

45

A. Yes.

Q. You also said that you decided to get tested, and that you'd seen a sign somewhere?

A. Yes.

5

Q. Where had you seen a sign?

A. On the freeway, on the Eastern Freeway.

10 Q. Okay. Had anyone in relation to the work that you were doing in hotel quarantine suggested to you that if you feel symptoms, you should get tested?

A. No. I don't remember that.

15 Q. Sorry, when you say you don't remember, do you remember that that didn't happen or are you saying it could have happened but you just can't say for sure?

A. No, I think that didn't happen.

20 Q. Okay. So it was a sign on the highway that triggered you to go and get tested, was it?

A. Yes.

25 Q. And so when did you go and get tested?

A. On the same day when I came back from shift in the morning. In the afternoon --- in the evening, I went for the test.

30 Q. That same evening?

A. Yes.

Q. And after you got tested, what did you do then?

35

A. I went back home and ate, like, had some sleep. And after when I got back from the sleep, I was feeling pretty good after that. I felt like it's a normal common cold. And I didn't have shift that day for the hotel quarantine so I got --- I had done some food deliveries after that.

40

Q. Okay. So let's just deal with that one by one. You went and got tested in the evening at the hospital. You went home and you went back to bed?

A. Yes.

45

Q. How long were you in bed for?

A. Two or three hours, maybe. I don't remember exactly. I think two or three hours.

Q. Okay. So when you got out of bed, was it still the same day?

5 A. Yes, same day, two or three hours, after two or three hours in the evening.

Q. Okay. So it's still the same day as the day that you first felt the symptoms, still the same day that you were on shift and had gone home and gone to bed, still the same day that you had your test?

10 A. Yes.

Q. And you felt a bit better after that sleep in the evening?

15 A. Yes.

Q. So what did you do then?

A. I went for food delivery, three or four food deliveries.

20 Q. When you say you went for food delivery, you did the delivery?

A. Yes.

25 Q. When did you find out about the results of your test?

A. Next morning.

Q. Okay. Explain what happened there.

30 A. So I woke up in the morning at 9 am, to be exact. So actually I had a class in the morning for my course. And I had received a call from the hospital that my COVID test was positive. They told me that I'd be expecting a call from the DHHS in a couple of hours. Yes, that's about it.

35 Q. Did you get a call from the DHHS?

A. And then the next --- yes, after two or three hours I received a call from DHHS as well.

40 Q. And did they tell you that you needed to self-isolate at home?

45 A. Yes. Yes, they asked me about everything, like where you went for the last 14 days, about everything, and, like, what you need to do from now, like just stay home and tell your housemates to come back home and give the contact number to them as well.

Q. Okay. You have housemates, do you?

A. Yes.

5 Q. How many housemates did you have at that time?

A. Three more. So total four including me.

10 Q. And did those housemates go and get tested, as far as you're aware?

A. Yes.

Q. And as far as you're aware, did they get positive results or negative results?

15 A. No, negative. Negative.

Q. Okay. So did you self-isolate at home?

A. Yes.

20

Q. Just staying in your room?

A. Yes.

25 Q. Talk us through the symptoms that you experienced through that period that you were self-isolating.

A. I had checked my fever around the day I got my results. I was just like a bit tired. There was a constant pain in the throat and sometimes I felt my chest to be heavy, just a pain in my chest as well. But my runny nose and --- yes, my runny nose got better the day before. But there was constant pain in the throat all the way through and some coughing in the morning as well.

30

35 Q. Did you hear further from DHHS during the time that you were self-isolating at home?

A. Yes, they called me every day, every day at, like --- a couple --- in two days, they would give me one call to ask me about symptoms, were they getting better or what were the symptoms, to keep track of them. They told me if something happens, like if you feel shortness of breath or something, please give a call to the hospital and just go over there.

40

Q. Okay. And did you go back to the hospital during that period when you were isolating at home?

45

A. No.

Q. You say in your statement at paragraph 98 that on day 11, you got a phone call. Tell us about that phone call.

5 A. Yes, they asked me --- yes, they were keeping a track for the symptoms every day up till date, so they knew, like, I was --- which they told me you have to wait three days symptom-free for, like, your isolation to be finished, for your quarantine to be finished. They told me that you have already done three days, and they will send me the letter from the DHHS that you are allowed to go out somewhere.

10 Q. Okay. And what happened in the three days after you received that phone call? Did you have any symptoms?

A. No.

15 Q. So at the end of that three days, what did you do?

A. Still, like, I did --- I stayed at my home for two or three days. And after that, like after two or three days, I again started to do food deliveries.

20 Q. Sorry, just say that again. After two or three days, you?

A. Yes, after two or three days from getting my letter from the DHHS, that you're allowed to go out, after two --- I think after three days, I went for food deliveries again.

25 Q. Okay. Again, you delivering the food?

A. Yes. After three days.

30 Q. And did you experience any other symptoms after that three-day period?

A. Yes. After three days, there was --- I could feel a shortness of breath after going outside for the food deliveries. After walking a bit, I could feel shortness of breath. And by next day, shortness of breath got a bit bad. And then I went to the hospital the next morning because I couldn't bear the shortness of breath. So I went to the hospital.

40 Q. You say your shortness of breath got a bit bad the next day. What do you mean by "got a bit bad"?

A. I couldn't breathe properly. So I called the DHHS first in the morning, by 5.00 am or something, and then they told me, like, just call the hospital, like to the emergency department. I informed the emergency department that I was a positive patient earlier, and then I went to the hospital.

45 Q. Okay. And what happened at the hospital?

A. I stayed there for six, seven hours, and they gave me some medicines. They gave me an asthma pump, a Ventolin, and that's it. And in the time of the hospital, I was feeling pretty good then, in three or four hours, after taking Ventolin.

5 Q. Did you have another COVID test at that point?

A. Yes, they took my test as well.

Q. Okay. And did you get the results of that test?

10

A. Yes. I think they called --- I don't remember when they called me, whether in the evening or the next --- yes, I think in the evening they called me, that "You are still positive so you will be expecting the call from DHHS." But when the DHHS called me, they told me that "You have already covered the period of isolation, so you're still allowed to go outside, because you have covered the period of isolation."

15

Q. Okay. So just so we can understand that, you tested positive, you did 14 days of isolation, and the last three of those days you hadn't felt any symptoms, so you went and did some food delivery?

20

A. Yes.

Q. The day after that you were having shortness of breath and trouble breathing, so you went to the hospital?

25

A. Yes.

Q. You got another test. That showed that you were still positive.

30

A. Yes.

Q. But then when you had a discussion with the Department, what did they say to you?

35

A. That, "Because you have covered the 14 days of isolation, like, then you're still allowed to go outside, because the particles may be still inside that are showing positive."

Q. Okay. And so what did you do?

40

A. I wasn't feeling good, so I stayed at home for that week. I didn't --- I didn't --- yeah, I went to the --- my job in the warehouse, after four or five days, when I started to feel pretty good.

45

Q. Okay. Just to wrap up, sir, I've got three questions for you. When you first started to feel the symptoms when you were doing the overnight shift at Rydges, why didn't you tell anyone there that you were feeling unwell?

A. I thought, like, it's a normal common cold symptom. It was not --- I wasn't fully aware of the symptoms from the COVID. I can't --- it's same with coughing as well. But my cough wasn't bad that much. So, yes.

5

Q. And had anyone involved in the security work you were doing at Rydges told you that you should report if you felt symptoms?

A. No.

10

Q. And why was it that you went to your normal warehouse job in the week after you received your second positive test?

A. Yes, because I read in the news that it is possible for the patients to still have positive tests for two or three months, because the particles may be in your body. But you can't be infectious, you can't, like, spread the virus, but the particles are still inside your body. I read in the news.

15

Q. And was that all? So, what DHHS --

20

A. Yes, and the DHHS officer also told me that you're allowed to go outside since you have already

Q. And finally, the night that you did your first test, before you got the results, you went out and did some food deliveries.

25

A. Yes.

Q. Why did you do that?

30

A. I felt pretty good and I was getting bored at my house. That's why, I felt like it's a change of weather or something, change of --- yes, change of mind. It was to divert my mind.

MR IHLE: They're all the questions I have for this witness, Madam Chair. I've been approached by two parties in respect of questions, and one is from the Department of Health and Human Services, who I understand seek leave in respect of matters covered in paragraph 64. And the other is from Wilson Security regarding two related matters, one being the chain of command at the hotel and the role of the authorised officers.

40

CHAIR: Yes. Ms Harris, are you ready to proceed?

MS HARRIS QC: Yes, Madam Chair. We had communicated that there may be some matters that arise later that might need further investigation given when the statement was received, but there is that one matter that we would seek leave to cross-examine this witness about, Madam Chair, if you please.

45

CHAIR: Yes, Ms Harris. I'll grant that leave.

MS HARRIS QC: Thank you, Madam Chair.

5

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS HARRIS QC

10 MS HARRIS QC: Witness, you've given evidence at paragraph 64 that during your shifts at the Rydges Hotel, you don't remember seeing anyone wearing a vest with "authorised officer" written on it?

A. I don't remember.

15

CHAIR: Sorry, "I don't remember"? Is that what you said, sir, "I don't remember"? Thank you.

A. Yes.

20

MS HARRIS QC: So you don't recall seeing anyone with a vest saying "authorised officer"?

A. No.

25

Q. Now, rosters that can be made available to the Board will show that there were authorised officers rostered to the Rydges Hotel at times relevant to your evidence.

A. Okay.

30

Q. Is it the case that there may well have been some authorised officers rostered to the hotel that you weren't aware of?

A. Like, the authorised officers people or what? I don't know. I haven't seen the authorised officer over there. I don't remember that. I haven't seen the people ---

35

CHAIR: Sorry, I just missed the last part. "I haven't seen the authorised officers there. I don't know --"

40 A. Yes. I don't remember seeing the authorised people, authorised officers. I'm not sure.

CHAIR: During your shifts?

45 A. Yes.

CHAIR: Thank you.

MS HARRIS QC: And the reason that you say that is because you didn't see anyone wearing an "authorised officer" vest; is that right?

5 A. Yes.

Q. It's possible, isn't it, that the authorised officers were present but not wearing a vest saying "authorised officer"?

10 A. I don't know whether --- like, who, which people are the authorised officers if they're not wearing the vests. So I don't recollect if they were there or not.

Q. And it's also possible that there were authorised officers on-site but they may not have identified themselves to you?

15

A. Yes, maybe. But how can I know?

MS HARRIS QC: Thank you, Madam Chair. Those are our questions.

20 CHAIR: Thank you, Ms Harris. And, Mr Craig?

MR CRAIG SC: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. I just really have a question in a sense flowing from a question Ms Harris asked, effectively about the chain of command in the circumstances of the witness's answers to those questions.

25

CHAIR: Yes, go on, Mr Craig.

MR CRAIG SC: Thank you.

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CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR CRAIG SC

MR CRAIG SC: Sir, who did you understand was in charge of quarantine at the hotel you were working at?

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A. Which hotel?

Q. All of them.

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A. Unified Security.

Q. But other than security, in charge of the quarantine at the hotel, did you know who was in charge?

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A. No, I just knew the company we were representing. It was Unified Security. That's it.

Q. And if you had a problem that needed to be reported or escalated to anybody, did you know who to do that to?

5 A. Just to the supervisor in each hotel.

Q. And am I correct to understand that you did not understand that authorised officers were in the building?

10 A. No, I don't remember whether they were there or not.

Q. No. So nobody told you that there were authorised officers in the hotel?

A. No. No.

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MR CRAIG SC: Thank you. No further questions, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you, and just to be clear about that, sir, when you say you had --- when you had a problem, you reported to the supervisor in the hotel, you mean the security supervisor? Have I understood you correctly?

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A. Yes.

CHAIR: So the person you recognised as the person supervising the security workers?

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A. Yes.

CHAIR: Yes. Anything further, Mr Ihle, for this witness?

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MR IHLE: Not from me, but I should say, Madam Chair, that as of 20 past 11 this morning, solicitors acting on behalf of the Rydges Hotel Group have sought further information from the Board. Some of that information has been provided, but I understand they press for significant aspects of the witness' statement that have been redacted to be provided to them. That, of course, has not been able to be addressed in the time since they first made contact, and indeed it was 11.56 when they indicated they continued to press. I want to inconvenience the witness as little as possible, and if I have the opportunity to speak to counsel for Rydges, I'm confident we can resolve this over the course of 10 or 15 minutes. I'm not sure whether the Board would seek to take lunch, but given that this is the last witness for the day, whether the Board would otherwise be prepared just to stand down for that 10 or five minutes and perhaps deal with this matter during the ordinary lunchtime and have him recalled and dealt with.

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CHAIR: Yes. I can see Mr Woods now on my screen. I'm sure you heard Mr Ihle give that indication, Mr Woods, that he got that late notice, that he is suggesting that we take the lunch adjournment now and resume at 2.00 and give you the opportunity

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to have that discussion with Mr Ihle. Is that an appropriate course?

MR WOODS: I think I can save the Board's time, Madam Chair, by saying they are not issues we seek to examine the witness on; rather, they're just matters --- and
5 I should say they're relatively few, and it's just a word here or there so we can understand.

CHAIR: I see.

10 MR WOODS: So we don't need to trouble the Board with it now.

CHAIR: I see. Thank you for that indication, Mr Woods.

MR WOODS: Thank you.

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CHAIR: So that being so, Mr Ihle, it would appear that we've finished witnesses for the day. Is that correct?

MR IHLE: Yes, that's so, and I'd ask that the witness now be excused.

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CHAIR: Yes. Thank you, sir, you are excused. You can take your leave. Thank you.

A. Thank you so much.

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THE WITNESS WITHDREW

30 CHAIR: So, Mr Ihle, as I said, that completes the evidence for today. Now, as I understand it, the Inquiry is to resume hearings on Thursday of this week, 27 August.

MR IHLE: Yes. That's the currently planned timetable, which I think will be kept
35 to. Thursday, 27 August, to start with witnesses as to the role of DJPR in establishing the Hotels Program. Witnesses on Friday --

CHAIR: That's the Government Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions?

40 MR IHLE: Indeed. Caught up with the acronyms here. So Thursday will be caught up with the role of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions in establishing the Hotel Quarantine Program. Friday will be witnesses concerning the examination of the role and perspective of the hotels involved in the Hotel Quarantine Program. Monday of next week, we'll examine the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions'
45 role in the contractual and logistical structure of the Hotel Quarantine Program. Tuesday will follow with evidence as to aspects of the day-to-day involvement of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Jobs, Precincts and

Regions, and Victoria Police in the running of the Program.

5 Wednesday, 2 September will concern witnesses regarding the role and perspectives of security firms, including head contractors and subcontractors. And Thursday, 3 September, examining the role and perspectives of security firms, including the head contractors and subcontractors, will continue if necessary.

10 CHAIR: Thanks, Mr Ihle. And having given that indication, it's timely to make a few comments. So obviously now the Inquiry starts to turn to a substantial number of witnesses from government departments, and I remind parties, as foreshadowed at the outset, that this Inquiry and indeed the hearings that will commence on Thursday depend on those witnesses and their respective departments complying with the timelines for the production of documents and the production of witness statements. And whilst acknowledging that the timelines that are being set are short, they're 15 timelines that are being set to fit with the Inquiry's timelines.

20 So I want to repeat with emphasis that the timely and effective conduct of this Inquiry requires the timely and effective responses from the government departments being required to provide information to this Inquiry.

25 So with that reminder, with emphasis, Mr Ihle, we will adjourn now until Thursday, and the topics that you've outlined for the next stage of hearing will shortly appear on the website. I will otherwise adjourn.

MR IHLE: As the Board pleases.

**HEARING ADJOURNED AT 1.16 PM UNTIL 10.00 AM ON THURSDAY,
27 AUGUST 2020**

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