

Witness Statement from Mika Verosaari in response to NTP 106

1. What is your title and role within AHS Hospitality Pty Ltd (company)?

Mika Verosaari, AHS General Manager, Victoria & Tasmania

2. What is your relevant employment background and work history?

AHS Hospitality 4 years. Quest Apartments Regional General Manager 3.5yrs, Mantra Little Bourke GM 3 years. Over 20 years in the hospitality industry.

Services provided by your company

3. What services does your company usually provide?

AHS provide outsourced housekeeping and public area cleaning to hotels.

4. What is your company's usual client profile?

3-5 star hotels in major cities throughout Australia and New Zealand.

5. Prior to the hotel quarantine program, what services (if any) had your company (or a company in your corporate group, if relevant) provided to the Victorian government?

AHS did not provide any services to the Victorian Government prior to the hotel quarantine program.

AHS is part of the Chandler Macleod Group and the following businesses in the group currently or have provided services to the Victorian government:

- **Chandler Macleod** provides temporary recruitment / labour-hire and permanent recruitment services
- **Vivir** provides services to government funded Approved Aged Care facilities for the provision of Allied Health Services (please note that these services are not provided directly to the government)
- **Chandler Macleod People Insights** currently provide assessment centre, bulk psychometric assessment, managerial assessments and video interview services
- **Aurion** provide outsourced payroll services

Involvement of your company in the hotel quarantine program

6. What services has your company provided as part of the hotel quarantine program?

AHS provide the following services as part of the hotel quarantine program:

- Pathogen cleaning of rooms occupied by guest(s) with COVID-19
- Public area cleaning & disinfecting of hotels with quarantined guests
- Vehicle cleaning that are transporting quarantine guests

7. Does your company currently provide services as part of the hotel quarantine program?

Yes, AHS currently provide the following services:

- Public area toilet cleaning at Brady Hotel and Grand Chancellor Melbourne
- Vehicle cleaning at PARKROYAL Hotel Melbourne Airport

8. How did your company come to provide services as part of the hotel quarantine program?

On 29 May 2020, AHS were requested by [REDACTED], Project Officer – Accommodation Support, Operation Soteria, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions by way of telephone and later by email to provide a quotation for pathogen cleaning services at Rydges on Swanston Hotel for touch point public area cleaning.

- a) Did you reach an agreement with the Victorian Government to provide services as part of the hotel quarantine program? If so, please provide details.

Yes. AHS began providing services on 3 June 2020 at Novotel South Wharf.

An "Agreement for Professional Services – Cleaning Services at Quarantine Sites" was executed on 13 August 2020.

- b) Did you reach direct agreement with any hotel or hotels which were participants in the hotel quarantine program to provide services as part of the hotel quarantine program? If so, please provide details

No, AHS liaised with [REDACTED] and his team from the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions to provide the services.

9. Prior to any agreement being reached with the Victorian government/a hotel (as applicable) was there any discussion or negotiation regarding infection control, personal protective equipment and specialised training for cleaning staff who would be involved in the hotel quarantine program?

There were discussions between AHS and the Victorian Government about AHS operating procedures, AHS providing all personal protective equipment and that AHS has trained staff, but I was not part of those initial discussions.

10. Is your company currently providing services as part of the hotel quarantine program?

Yes. AHS currently provide services to Brady Hotel, Grand Chancellor and PARKROYAL Melbourne Airport.

Services provided by your company at quarantine hotels

11. In respect of each quarantine hotel at which your company has provided services, please provide details of –

- a) What services were provided;

Pathogen cleaning of rooms occupied by guest(s) with COVID-19

- b) What areas of the hotel staff worked in; and

Public area cleaning & disinfecting of hotels with quarantined guests (rooms, foyer, public toilets, guest corridors, elevators)

- c) Which staff of your company provided those services.

See attached document named AHS-2-Staff hotel list.

12. To your knowledge, were any of your staff rostered to work at quarantine hotels also working at other locations (including aged care facilities)? If so, please provide details.

██████████ (AHS Operations Manager) also works in cleaning at Tabulam and Templer Home for the Aged with a different employer but her involvement is very limited in the Hotel Quarantine program. She does not perform any cleaning tasks; her role is to attend about once per fortnight and monitor the team as they work.

██████████ and ██████████ (AHS pathogen specialists) also worked at Quay West Hotel as public area cleaners. From the beginning of Stage 4 lockdown, they have been dedicated to the Pathogen team who work in multiple locations as needed.

Direction and Decision Making

13. What directions, information or requests have been given to your company by any government department or agency, in relation to the hotel quarantine program? Please provide details.

DHHS provided AHS with: *Hotel Quarantine Response (Advice for cleaning requirements for hotels who are accommodating quarantined, close contacts and confirmed COVID-19 guests)*. This document was revised twice as outlined below at no. 14.

14. Did the directions, information and requests given to you by any government department or agency change over time? If so, please provide details.

The first version of the document noted at no.13, dated 16 June 2020 was revised as follows:

- 25 June (additional information on 2 step or 2 in 1 clean, additional information on PPE, “Exit deep clean of guest room” updated to “Cleaning requirements for quarantine and quarantine positive hotels” which covered exit cleans and daily cleaning of communal areas in quarantine and quarantine positive hotels)
- 28 June – PPE requirements in Table 3: PPE requirements for the different types of cleaning in quarantine positive and quarantine hotels updated to detail Outbreak clean (guest rooms and communal areas)

These updates were assessed by the AHS Senior Safety Business Partner. No changes were necessary to any AHS processes as they already complied with the Victorian government’s requirements.

15. What directions, information or requests have been given to your company by the hotel/s at which it was providing services, in relation to the hotel quarantine program? Please provide details.

No direction received from hotels. AHS communicated to hotels our role/scopes as directed by DHHS.

16. Did the directions, information and requests given to you by the hotel/s change over time? If so, please provide details.

No, see above at 15.

Training and Supervision

17. What (if any) training was provided to your staff by any government department or agency regarding COVID-19 and how to work in a safe manner?

DHHS provided the following training:

- Site walk-around site orientation on Day 1 (03.06.20) at Novotel South Wharf
- DHHS nurse conducted PPE training at Stamford Plaza on day 1. (17.06.20)
- Brady Hotel, Day 1 (17.06.20) Site orientation and safety briefing.

18. What (if any) training was provided to your staff by your company regarding COVID-19 and how to work in a safe manner?

AHS provided face to face training with all AHS staff covering:

- Document review of the developed work process
- Document review of the associated risk assessment
- Practical demonstration on donning and doffing PPE
- Practical demonstration on disinfecting hard surfaces with chemical (focus on single use of gloves and cloths and adhering to chemical contact time on surface)
- Practical demonstration on disinfecting soft furnishings with SW9 steam unit

19. What (if any) training was provide to your staff by any other person regarding COVID-19 and how to work in a safe manner?

None

20. What onsite supervision was/is in place for your staff at each quarantine hotel?

Every premises where AHS provides services, has an allocated AHS team leader in attendance who is an experienced housekeeping manager or senior supervisor trained in the required work processes.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

21. What PPE (if any) was provided by your company for your staff to use when working at a quarantine hotel?

AHS provided all disposable gloves, masks, coveralls, plastic goggles.

22. What PPE (if any) was provided to your staff working at a quarantine hotel by any government department or agency?

AHS provided all PPE to our own staff. However, some properties had masks and gloves available should they have been needed.

23. Were your staff at any time required to provide their own PPE when undertaking work at a quarantine hotel? If so, please provide details.

No. PPE was provided by AHS.

24. What directions did your company give to your staff about when to use PPE at a quarantine hotel?

AHS staff were directed that PPE was mandatory and required to be replaced at a minimum after every room or public area of the hotel worked in.

25. What training was given to your staff regarding the correct use of PPE at a quarantine hotel? If there was training, who provided that training?

Training provided by AHS Senior Safety Business Partner and Operations Manager using the AHS pathogen cleaning guide covering:

- Hand hygiene guide
- Replacement frequency
- Sequence for putting PPE on
- How to safely remove PPE

26. As far as you are aware, was there ever a shortage of PPE at a quarantine hotel? If so, how was that shortage managed?

No. AHS had no shortage of PPE for our workers

27. Was your company ever asked to provide PPE to anyone at a quarantine hotel other than your own staff? If so, please provide details.

No

Other equipment

28. Other than PPE, what equipment and cleaning products (if any) were provided by your company for its staff to use at quarantine hotels?

AHS provided the following:

- Housekeeping trolley
- Cleaning chemicals/disinfectant
- Vacuum with HEPA filtration fitted (e.g. Henry Vacuum)
- Large supply of disposable cleaning cloths (e.g. Chux-type, microfiber cloths)
- Contaminated linen bags and pre-prepared labels for mattress protectors (from Laundry supplier)
- Alginate or large plastic bags to contain wet linen bags (based on linen supplier guidance)
- Doodlebug mop, disposable mop heads
- Plastic rubbish bags
- Long rubber gloves for toilet cleaning
- Empty scissor trolley to transport spoiled linen and rubbish from the room
- SW9 high pressure steam unit and disposable microfibre attachments for use on soft furnishings and carpets.
- Wide masking tape and plastic (to cover power outlets)

29. Other than PPE, what equipment any products (if any) were provided by any government department or agency or by the hotels for your company's staff to use at quarantine hotels?

Trolleys to remove linen and rubbish were provided by the hotel.

30. As far as you are aware, was there ever a shortage of equipment (other than PPE) or cleaning products at a quarantine hotel? If so, how was that shortage managed?

No. AHS supplied all chemicals and equipment for the work undertaken by our team.

31. Was your company ever asked to provide equipment (other than PPE) or cleaning products to anyone at a quarantine hotel, other than your staff? If so, please provide details.

No.

32. What cleaning products did your company use to perform its services at quarantine hotel(s)?

- Diversey Virex
- Diversey Taskforce
- Diversey Divercleanse
- Diversey Taskforce
- Diversey Glance

Complaints and concerns

33. Who was responsible for identifying and addressing health and safety risks to cleaning staff arising from the quarantine program?

AHS managed the process of identifying and addressing health and safety risks in relation to the activities undertaken only by our team.

An experienced AHS housekeeping manager or senior supervisor leads every crew to provide supervision and to handle any health and safety risks raised by the team. These are escalated as appropriate.

34. What risks were identified? What was done (if anything) to mitigate those risks? In your opinion, were those measures adequate and effective?

A high-level risk assessment and task specific risk assessments were completed by the AHS Senior Safety Business Partner on those activities performed by AHS staff. In summary, the key risks identified were:

- Risk of AHS staff contracting COVID-19 from infected person(s) or transmitting COVID-19 to other persons within a quarantine hotel
- Risk of AHS staff or other persons contracting COVID-19 from a contaminated surface

Summary of controls identified and implemented:

- Work process based on healthcare terminal clean developed in conjunction with infection control specialists
- Equipment and chemical suppliers engaged prior to commencement to ensure substances, tools and equipment used are fit for task
- Work process requires that duties are only completed in vacant areas with no guests or other persons in the area
- Work process requires new PPE to be used for every time the work area is changed within a hotel
- Only experienced/ senior team members are approved to complete these work duties
- All workers trained using developed SOPS and risk assessments as training tools. Training includes correct use of PPE and endorsed work process (disinfection using chemical and/or steam).

The work process undertaken by the AHS team has maintained the safety of AHS staff and ensured the activities undertaken are completed correctly.

35. Who was responsible for identifying and acting on complaints or concerns regarding work conditions for cleaning staff in relation to the quarantine program?

AHS staff are directed to raise any concerns with an AHS Operations Manager, Senior Safety Business Partner, or me. The AHS manager will then liaise directly with either DHHS or hotel as appropriate.

36. What complaints and concerns (if any) were raised? In relation to any complaints and concerns:

- (a) what were the details;
- (b) how was the complaint or concern dealt with; and
- (c) what was the outcome?

1. Stamford Plaza

- a. Poor social distancing by security guards in lifts and staff room.
- b. I called a meeting with DHHS team leader and Security manager on Saturday 20 June. Security manager undertook to discuss correct procedures with his team.
- c. I did not have any further concerns raised by my staff and I did not attend the hotel again.

2. Stamford Plaza

- a. No bins for rubbish disposal and no trolley to move the rubbish to the loading dock
- b. I raised it with the DHHS team leader
- c. DHHS sourced a trolley from the hotel. Bins not provided.

37. Did you or your company identify or receive notice of poor or unacceptable conduct by any person in connection with the hotel quarantine program?

No

If so: (a) what were the details;
(b) how were those issues dealt with; and
(c) what was the outcome?

38. As far as you are aware, have any of the cleaning staff involved in the quarantine program tested positive for COVID-19?

No

Post-shift Arrangements

39. What (if any) direction or guidance was provided to your staff by any government department regarding what precautions to undertake after completing their duties at quarantine hotels?

None

40. What (if any) direction or guidance was provided to your staff by your company regarding what precautions to undertake after completing their duties at quarantine hotels?

AHS work process and training covered end of shift activities:

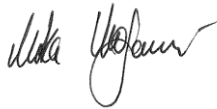
- Remove all cleaning equipment from room after thorough cleaning and disinfecting by wiping down with a clean cloth soaked in disinfectant
- Removal and disposal of all PPE before leaving the site
- Hand hygiene following PPE removal
- Instruction to always wear masks and carry hand sanitiser when travelling for work purposes
- Completion of daily health questionnaire prior to commencing next shift

Additional information

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

None

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mika Verosaari', written in a cursive style.

Mika Verosaari

Date 26 August 2020