

IN THE MATTER OF
THE BOARD OF INQUIRY
INTO THE HOTEL QUARANTINE PROGRAM

**STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER
BRETT EAGLE**

Deputy Chief Fire Officer

I, **CHRISTOPHER BRETT EAGLE**, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, say as follows in response to the Notice to Produce a Witness Statement issued by the Board and dated 4 September 2020:

Q1. What is your title and role within the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)?

1. I am a Deputy Chief Fire Officer at the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (**DELWP**). I have been employed in this role since July 2019.
2. In my role as Deputy Chief Fire Officer, I lead the Port Phillip region team in the land management function of DELWP, and the fire management responsibilities of Forest Fire Management Victoria. I am experienced in incident management more generally, primarily in relation to Class 1 Emergencies.

Q2. What is your relevant professional background and work history?

3. Prior to my role as Deputy Chief Fire Officer, I have held the roles of:
 - a. Assistant Chief Fire Officer, DELWP (September 2016 – July 2019)
 - b. Operations Manager, Country Fire Authority (**CFA**)(March 2013 – September 2016)
 - c. Acting Assistant Chief Officer, CFA (2015)
 - d. Operations Officer, CFA (2009 – 2013)
 - e. Firefighter (Recruit Firefighter through to Station Officer), CFA (2002-2006)

Q3. Please describe what experience you have in emergency management, noting any particular experience in public health emergencies.

4. I am trained in various levels of Incident Control – Levels 1 and 2. I am currently undertaking the Incident Controller Level 2 to 3 Transition Programme.
5. My experience also includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Performing a rostered duty officer role (which is different to an Incident Controller role);
 - b. Completing two tours to Bairnsdale for the Gippsland Fires response during the 2019/20 summer season as Deputy Incident Controller;
 - c. Undertaking role of Regional Controller and Regional Agency Commander for CFA and DELWP; and
 - d. Interstate and International deployments as Logistics Officer and Agency Liaison Officer.
6. Up until my involvement in the Hotel Quarantine Program (**Program**), I did not have any particular experience in public health emergencies.

Your role as Deputy State Controller – Health

Q4. When and by whom were you appointed a Deputy State Controller – Health?¹

7. On 28 March 2020, I received a text message on my mobile phone from Chris Hardman, DELWP Chief Fire Officer, to discuss supporting the Department of Health and Human Services (**DHHS**) in relation to the Program.
8. Later that day, I attended a teleconference with the Emergency Management Commissioner Andrew Crisp, DELWP Chief Fire Officer Chris Hardman and Deputy Chief Fire Officers Scott Falconer, Andrew Morrow, Allyson Lardner and Tony English. Commissioner Crisp asked if we were prepared to assist in the role of Deputy State Controller – Health in relation to the Program. Scott Falconer, Andrew Morrow and I volunteered to assist.
9. During my first shift rotation, Andrew Crisp said that two people in the role of Deputy State Controller – Health were preferable to three people, to provide for consistency. Scott Falconer, Andrew Morrow and I agreed that Scott Falconer and I would participate in the Program as Deputy State Controllers – Health.

¹ DELW.0001.0020.0199.

10. I am not aware of any formal document appointing me to the role of Deputy State Controller – Health. My deployment to the State Control Centre (**SCC**) appeared to occur in the standard form, under emergency management arrangements and the provisions of the *Emergency Management Act 2013* (Vic). I did not complete any paperwork prior to my deployment.
11. My first day in the role of Deputy State Controller – Health was on 29 March 2020.

Q5. What were the reasons given to you for your appointment (if any)?

12. I cannot recall any specific reason being given to me for my appointment. I understood from the teleconference on 28 March 2020 that the Deputy State Controller – Health required emergency management skills to support the State Controller – Health.

Q6. When and why did you cease your appointment as Deputy State Controller – Health?

13. I ceased my appointment as Deputy State Controller – Health on 1 May 2020.
14. The role of the Deputy State Controller – Health was transferred to Pam Williams, Director COVID19 Accommodation, DHHS, on 18 April 2020, as part of the decision to move Operation Soteria to the DHHS Emergency Operation Centre (**EOC**).
15. In my last two shift rotations, between 21 April 2020 and 1 May 2020, I was not performing the role of Deputy State Controller – Health in full, but rather was supporting Pam Williams as part of the transition of Operation Soteria. Pam Williams was actioning most matters that I would ordinarily attend to in the Deputy State Controller – Health role, unless she expressly asked me to assist with a matter.
16. My role and responsibilities ended on 1 May 2020 and Operation Soteria transitioned to the EOC.²

Q7. To whom did you report as Deputy State Controller – Health?

² DELW.0001.0020.1474.

17. I reported to the State Controller – Health, who was Jason Helps or Andrea Spiteri (both DHHS), at any given time.

Q8. Please describe your role as Deputy State Controller – Health, with particular reference to:

a) your role and functions at the State Control Centre;

18. My primary role as the Deputy State Controller – Health was to coordinate inter-agency communication and information-sharing in relation to Operation Soteria matters. I worked at the SCC, and acted as a coordinator between the agencies and the State Controller – Health.

19. I received directions and information from the State Controller – Health.

20. I would escalate matters from the various agencies to the State Controller – Health, or to the DHHS State Agency Commander, Braedan Hogan or [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who reported to the State Controller – Health. I would determine which role to escalate the matter to, depending on who was available and how complex the matter was. I would escalate the more complex matters, or matters requiring more significant decisions, to the State Controller – Health directly. If I needed less complex information or a straightforward decision to be made, I would escalate the request to the DHHS State Agency Commander. I would then communicate that information or decisions to the relevant agencies.

21. There were occasions where the State Controller – Health or DHHS State Agency Commander would respond directly to the agency seeking the decision or information, and not through me. On those occasions, I might not necessarily have had visibility of the progression or outcome of those matters.

22. If it was an operational matter, depending on the nature of the decision that was required, I would either action it myself or escalate it to the State Controller – Health or DHHS State Agency Commander.

b) your role within Operation Soteria;

23. My role within Operation Soteria was confined to my role and functions at the SCC.

c) your accountability for Operation Soteria;

24. In my role as Deputy State Controller – Health, I was accountable to the State Controller – Health, in relation to emergency management coordination

matters.

d) your day-to-day functions as Operation Soteria lead, including your activities (if any) at any hotel involved in the Hotel Quarantine Program;

25. The typical day-to-day functions of the role of Deputy State Controller – Health were generally outlined in the ‘daily timeline’ section of the Handover Notes that I drafted and provided to Scott Falconer at the completion of my first shift in the role on 1 April 2020, as set out below.³

Daily timeline

Time	Task	Responsible
0900	State Control Team meeting - As Deputy State Controller (DSC-H): You will need to provide brief report – ie current areas of focus, key challenges, overview of previous day activities, other key info SCT needs -	Chaired by State Controller - Health
1030	confirm agency leads for day, update contact list	DSC-H, with SRC EO
1100	text/email invite sent for daily meeting - DSC-H need to confirm agency leads for day for distribution	SCC support officer
1330	daily Soteria meeting - Refer below	Chaired by DSC-H
1600	confirm with Melbourne airport planned arrivals Distribute to agency leads - Minutes from 1330 meeting - Request details / changes for following day agency lead contact details - Arrival data	DSC-H SRC EO
End of day	Text EMC final numbers each day and confirmation last flight arrival.	DSC-H

³ DELW.0001.0020.0450.

26. I set up and led the daily Operation Soteria meetings at 1330 hours. At these meetings, each agency would provide an update on the last 24 hours and a snapshot of what the next 24 hours and beyond would look like, for the purpose of information-sharing and coordination.
27. At the daily Operation Soteria meetings, I coordinated discussion between the agencies to ensure they were effectively communicating with each other. Issues that arose at those meetings might be resolved at the meeting or require those agencies to action the items and report back to other agencies, or me. I escalated anything that related to public health or DHHS-related matters to the State Controller – Health or DHHS State Agency Commander. To the best of my knowledge, if it was a policy or public health question, the State Controller – Health may escalate to the DHHS Public Health Team and report back. I did not directly liaise with the DHHS Public Health Team. If it was an operational matter, depending on the nature of the decision that was required, I would either action it myself or escalate it to the State Controller – Health or DHHS State Agency Commander. For example, after conferring with DHHS and the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (**DJPR**) regarding their resource capacity, I was able to make operational decisions about whether projected incoming flights would exceed the capacity of hotel rooms and resourcing in Operation Soteria. In those circumstances, I was able to request, via a National Coordination Mechanism meeting, that those flights be diverted to another Australian airport.
28. In addition to the 1330 hours meetings, there were also daily State Control Team Meetings chaired by the State Controller – Health. I attended these meetings daily at 0900 hours and I would provide a brief, high-level overview of the numbers of returned travellers, and any key highlights that were relevant to the State Control Team.
29. In terms of the organisational structure within the SCC, the State Controller – Health was the lead, as this was a public health emergency. I was accountable for coordinating the Program on behalf of the State Controller – Health. I did not communicate any decisions relating to public health, policy or matters of significance without consulting and receiving directions from the State Controller – Health, or the DHHS State Agency Commanders.
30. I did not have any day-to-day activities or work 'on the ground' at any of the hotels involved in the Program.

Q9. To what extent, if at all, were guided or directed in your actions by:

- a) the State Controller – Health;**
- b) the Chief Health Officer; and**
- c) the Emergency Management Commissioner.**

31. I reported directly to the State Controller – Health. My actions were guided and directed by the State Controller – Health, as well as the DHHS State Agency Commanders, as set out in my answer to question 8, above.

32. I was not directly guided or directed by the Chief Health Officer during my time working in the Program. My requests for information or decisions were always made to the State Controller – Health, or DHHS State Agency Commanders and not to the Chief Health Officer.

33. I was not directly guided or directed by Andrew Crisp during my time working in the Program. Andrew Crisp would attend some of the 1330 hours meetings and National Coordination Mechanism meetings. I would also share information with Andrew Crisp, upon request.

Q10. Did you understand your role as Deputy State Controller – Health to be a part-time role (such that you would also perform your role in the Department on a part-time basis)? If so, what were the arrangements for you to perform each role?

34. Scott Falconer and I worked in the role as Deputy State Controller– Health through alternating shifts as follows:

- a) I worked in the role of Deputy State Controller – Health from 29 March-1 April 2020, 6-9 April 2020, 14-17 April 2020, 21-24 April 2020 and 27 April 2020-1 May 2020; and
- b) Scott worked in the role of Deputy State Controller – Health from 2-5 April 2020, 10-13 April 2020 and 18-20 April 2020.

35. I would undertake parts of my regular Deputy Chief Fire Officer role while I was in the role of Deputy State Controller – Health. However, the Deputy State Controller – Health role was my priority, and I would only undertake parts of my regular Deputy Chief Fire Officer role when I had the time and availability to do so.

36. Parts of my Deputy Chief Fire Officer role were performed by my team at

DELWP for the duration of my role as Deputy State Controller – Health.

Q11. The Board is aware that Mr Scott Falconer was also appointed a Deputy State Controller – Health. Please describe the arrangements for decision-making and maintaining communication between:

- a) you and Mr Falconer; and
- b) you both and the State Controller - Health.

37. The arrangements for decision-making between the State Controller – Health and the Deputy State Controller – Health on duty are described in my answers above, at questions 8 and 9.

38. To maintain communication, Scott Falconer and I prepared and provided to each other handover notes when we rotated out of our respective shifts.⁴ We would then follow this up with a phone call to discuss the matters raised in the respective handover document. We would also copy each other into any emails that required actioning, which we also discussed during the handover process.

39. Scott Falconer and I had regular verbal communication with the State Controller – Health. We and the Deputy State Controller – Health sat next to each other at the SCC and so we regularly communicated verbally. We would also send emails to the State Controller – Health when information or a decision was required.

Q12. Who at the State Control Centre and in Operation Soteria reported to you?

40. Nobody reported to me in my role as Deputy State Controller – Health.

Q13. Please describe the nature of the directions that you gave to those whom reported to you.

41. Not applicable.

⁴ See, for example, my handover notes: DELW.0001.0020.0450; DELW.0001.0020.0446.

Roles of agencies in Operation Soteria

Q14. At the time you were first appointed Deputy State Controller – Health, which agency roles did you understand was responsible for the following activities:

- a) ensuring compliance with quarantine requirements issued by the Chief Health Officer;**
- b) providing direction to private security guards involved in the Hotel Quarantine Program;**
- c) directing the appropriate use of personal protective equipment;**
- d) ensuring that detainees' dietary requirements were met;**
- e) coordinating cleaning services at hotels involved in the Hotel Quarantine Program?**

42. If this question asks if I was aware of the responsibility held for the activities by particular roles *within* agencies, when I was first appointed, I was not aware. To the extent that this question refers to my knowledge of the responsibility for the activities of the agencies themselves at the time I was first appointed, my understanding was based upon the Operation Soteria Plan dated 28 March 2020, which was in effect when I commenced in my role.⁵ Those roles were clarified between 29 March 2020 and 1 April 2020, as set out in my answer to question 22 below. Referring to each activity in turn, I can say as follows:

- a) ensuring compliance with quarantine requirements issued by the Chief Health Officer;**

43. The activity is very broadly expressed and could potentially incorporate all the activities under the Program. I am therefore not able to say that I had an understanding that one agency was alone responsible for the activity under the Operation Soteria Plan.

- b) providing direction to private security guards involved in the Hotel Quarantine Program;**

44. I understood that DJPR was responsible, as DJPR was tasked to 'manage

⁵ DELW.0001.0020.0206.

private security contracts to enforce quarantine requirements at the accommodation' under the relevant Operation Soteria Plan in effect when I commenced.⁶ By 1 April 2020, when I drafted my handover notes to Scott Falconer, I understood that DJPR's role in this respect was 'under guidance of DHHS of tasking and safety requirements.'⁷

c) directing the appropriate use of personal protective equipment;

45. When I was first appointed on 29 March 2020, personal protective equipment (PPE) was not an issue that arose from the terms of the Operation Soteria Plan, which required my consideration, and so this was not something that I personally reflected on at that time.

46. To the extent that the appropriate use of PPE refers to its use in accommodation under the Program, by 1 April 2020 when I drafted my handover notes to Scott Falconer, I understood that DJPR was 'providing logistics of accommodation venue – concierge / general queries, security staff, cleaning and catering staff – all under guidance of DHHS of tasking and safety requirements.'⁸ By 'safety requirements', I understood this to include that DHHS was responsible for directing the appropriate use of PPE.

d) ensuring that detainees' dietary requirements were met;

47. When I was first appointed on 29 March 2020, I understood that DJPR was responsible for this activity, as DJPR was responsible for 'Management of services for all passengers including food and amenities'.⁹ I was still of that view on 1 April 2020 when I drafted my handover notes to Scott Falconer, and that DJPR's role in this respect was 'under guidance of DHHS of tasking and safety requirements.'¹⁰

e) coordinating cleaning services at hotels involved in the Hotel Quarantine Program?

48. When I was first appointed on 29 March 2020, I understood that DJPR was responsible for this activity, as DJPR was responsible for 'Management of

⁶ DELW.0001.0020.0206 at 3.5.2.

⁷ DELW.0001.0020.0450.

⁸ DELW.0001.0020.0450.

⁹ DELW.0001.0020.0206 at 3.5.2.

¹⁰ DELW.0001.0020.0450.

services for all passengers including food and amenities'.¹¹ I was still of that view on 1 April 2020 when I drafted my handover notes to Scott Falconer, and that DJPR's role in this respect was 'under guidance of DHHS of tasking and safety requirements.'¹²

Q15. Were those roles accountable to you?

49. No.

a) If so, how did you satisfy yourself that those roles were being performed?

50. Not applicable.

b) If not, to whom were those roles and functions accountable?

51. In terms of each agency delivering on the sorts of operational activities set out in question 14 above, I understood that within each agency the reporting lines and accountabilities set up for Operation Soteria would apply.

Q16. Who was responsible for establishing a process for identifying and communicating to agencies involved in Operation Soteria, when there were any cases of COVID-19 in any of the hotels in the Hotel Quarantine Program?

52. DHHS was responsible for establishing a process for identifying and communicating to agencies involved in Operation Soteria when there were any cases of COVID-19 in any of the hotels in the Program.

53. An interim process was initially established in response to the first confirmed COVID-19 positive case at a hotel on 31 March 2020. Andrea Spiteri and I agreed that the DHHS State Agency Commander would advise me of any COVID-19 cases, and I would then advise other agencies, as required.¹³

54. I recall that this interim process did not need to be implemented because the process quickly evolved to creating a 'red floor' at hotels, to accommodate COVID-19 confirmed cases. I was not involved in establishing this process.

Q17. When and why was that process first established?

¹¹ DELW.0001.0020.0206 at 3.5.2.

¹² DELW.0001.0020.0450.

¹³ DELW.0001.0020.1580.

55. The interim process referred to in question 16 was first established in response to the first confirmed COVID-19 positive case at a hotel, on 31 March 2020.
56. Claire Febey raised concerns on 31 March 2020, which she set out in an email of the same date.¹⁴ I then consulted with DHHS in relation to how these concerns would be responded to. I then responded to Claire Febey on the same day, copying in Andrea Spiteri. I stated that a process and response would be provided by DHHS, an interim measure would involve the DHHS State Agency Commander advising me of any identified cases of COVID-19, and that I would then pass this information on to the agencies.

Q18. The Board is aware that by email dated 30 March 2020 [DJP.102.006.9293],¹⁵ a representative of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR), Ms Claire Febey, raised with you that the speed and reception process at hotels involved in the Hotel Quarantine Program in the first few days had meant that data entry was lagging and that there were urgent issues with the quality of such data.

When and how was that issue resolved, and by whom?

57. I was aware of this issue and engaged with it as set out below.
58. Prior to the email being received by Claire Febey on 30 March 2020, DHHS identified that there was a need for data collection and management, and asked me to brief David Cullen, State Intelligence Manager, COVID-19, SCC, on this matter and the database requirements.
59. I was copied in on Braedan Hogan's email response to Claire Febey's email at 4.43pm on 30 March 2020. Braedan Hogan stated and highlighted in green in that email in response to the data issues raised, "see previous email from me."¹⁶ I am not sure which specific 'previous email' Braedan Hogan was referring to, however I am aware of further emails progressing this matter, as set out below.
60. On 29 March 2020 and 30 March 2020, I was copied into a chain of email correspondence involving senior personnel from the SCC and DHHS, who were discussing data requirements and management. In this email, various database options were discussed, and ultimately in an email sent

¹⁴ DELW.0001.0020.1580.

¹⁵ DELW.0001.0020.0648; DELW.0001.0020.1967; DJP.102.006.9293.

¹⁶ DELW.0001.0020.1967.

on 30 March 2020 at 2.37pm, Dr Finn Romanes stated that, “The Public Health Commander has requested that there should NOT be a separate database for tracking and managing individuals who are in quarantine that is not PHESS at this time”. Dr Finn Romanes further stated that work on any separate databases should be paused and to instead work towards a modification to meet the needs of this project using PHESS.¹⁷

61. In a separate email chain on 29 and 30 March 2020, I was copied into an email from Braedon Hogan responding to Claire Febey, where he stated “We are working through the best platform to hold the data requirements – and how this is interoperable with our other data platforms”.¹⁸
62. At 4.38 pm on 30 March 2020, I separately responded to Claire Febey, copying Braedan Hogan and [REDACTED], to confirm that I was with Braedon and that he is “working on response”.¹⁹
63. Based on the various emails being sent between the SCC and DHHS, I considered that this matter was being appropriately progressed and responded to by the relevant agencies, and did not consider that any further escalation was required.
64. I cannot recall receiving any further emails raising issues or concerns in relation to this matter. I was not required to take any further action, or escalate the issue. I was aware that a program was created that enabled people in the field to enter data in a database. I am not aware of when this issue was ultimately resolved, or by whom.

Q19. The Board is also aware by that same email dated 30 March 2020, that Ms Febey raised with you that private security was not adequate, given that they had no powers to exercise and requested that you escalate a request for a permanent police presence at each hotel.

When and how was that issue resolved, and by whom?

65. On 29 March 2020, after seeking direction from [REDACTED], I responded to an email from Claire Febey dated 29 March 2020, where she raised that private security contractors have no powers to exercise and have been instructed only to monitor and escalate issues to Victoria Police.²⁰
66. On 30 March 2020 at 4:26pm, Braedan Hogan sent an email to Claire Febey, copying

¹⁷ DELW.0001.0020.1864.

¹⁸ DELW.0001.0020.1623.

¹⁹ DELW.0001.0020.0648.

²⁰ DELW.0001.0020.0651.

me, stating “We are seeking to understand how the private security have been briefed and what there [sic] role is and the limits of this role. We are considering the role of security, AO’s and VicPol.” Claire Febey responded on the same day at 4.29pm, copying Cam Nolan, Executive Director, Priority Projects Unit, DJPR and stating that Cam Nolan ‘has oversight of this’.²¹

67. On 30 March 2020 at 4:43pm, Braedan Hogan provided comments in green highlight in the email from Claire Febey dated 30 March 2020, which I was copied into.²²

There is a comment, “being discussed with Vicpol by DHHS”. I was not involved in the discussion between DHHS and Victoria Police, and I am not aware of what was discussed between DHHS and Victoria Police.

68. In response to the email of Claire Febey at 4.29pm on 30 March 2020, Cam Nolan responded to Braedan Hogan providing information about matters communicated to security companies, attaching briefing material for contracted security guards and requesting that DHHS update a Q&A briefing document and provide it to security managers.²³

69. I was not copied into any further correspondence in relation to this issue and received no further enquiries about this matter. I was not required to take any action in relation to the issue, or to escalate it. I am not aware of when or how this issue was ultimately resolved, or by whom.

Q20. What (if any) complaints did you receive from detainees about the operation of the Hotel Quarantine Program? When and how were they resolved?

70. I cannot recall directly receiving any complaints from returned travellers as part of my role as Deputy State Controller – Health.

71. I am aware that DJPR had set up a government assistance line, which was the first point of contact for returned travellers to raise complaints or other issues. As part of my role, I may have been made aware of the content of some complaints made through the government assistance line, either through discussions or by being copied into email correspondence relating to these matters. If I did have a role it would have been to facilitate passing this information on to the agencies for progression or resolution.

72. I was aware of other instances where complaints were raised outside the government assistance line. These were usually addressed without needing any involvement from

²¹ DELW.0001.0011.1189.

²² DELW.0001.0020.1967.

²³ DELW.0001.0011.1189.

me. When I was made aware of a matter which required my assistance, I took steps to raise this with the appropriate agency.

Q21. What issues were raised with you about the operation of the Hotel Quarantine Program, including in relation to:

(a) Communications between agencies; and

73. 'Communications between agencies' was a part of my daily role as coordinator between the agencies, as outlined in my response to question 8, above. A primary function of my role was to either escalate any issues raised by the agencies to the State Controller – Health or DHHS State Agency Commander, and report the information or decision back to the requesting agency, or connect the relevant agencies to progress and resolve the matter between themselves.

74. An example of an issue being raised about communications between agencies is identified in my response to question 16 above,²⁴ about a confirmed case of COVID-19 at one of the hotels involved in the Program.

75. I do not recall any other particular issues being raised with me regarding a lack of communication between agencies.

(b) Clarity of roles to be performed by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and DJPR.²⁵

76. See Question 22, below.

Q22. The Board is aware that the State Controller – Health, Mr Jason Helps, offered to Ms Febey that you would work with her on clarifying some roles and responsibilities and to work on a transition plan for the Deputy State Controller and DHHS assuming control of Operation Soteria. Please describe:

(a) when and how you worked with Ms Febey on those matters;

(b) the roles and responsibilities that were transitioned;

(c) how those roles and responsibilities were clarified.

77. On 29 March 2020 at 4.58pm, I was copied into an email from Jason Helps to Claire

²⁴ DELW.0001.0020.1580.

²⁵ DELW.0001.0020.1628; DELW.0001.0020.0648; DELW.0001.0020.1967.

Febey that discussed agency roles and responsibilities, as well as the proposal to work on a transition plan. Jason Helps wrote:

...As the Control Agency, DHHS has overall responsibility for all activities undertaken in response to this emergency. The response to the direction for all passengers returning to Victoria after 11.59 p.m. 28/03/20 requiring to be quarantined in approved accommodation is being led by Dep State Controller Chris Eagle as "Operation Soteria".

As discussed today I am extremely grateful to the support DJPR have provided to date, your team have demonstrated flexibility, good planning and expertise which has contributed to making the first day as successful as it could be. I also look forward to your team continuing to support Operation Soteria.

It is important however that we clarify some roles and responsibilities and work on a transition plan over the next day or so. Chris Eagle will work with you on this. Many of the roles DJPR provided in the planning, and operationally today will need to transition to the Deputy State Controller and DHHS as the Control Agency. I would like to clarify that, at a minimum, I would request DJPR continue to provide the valuable work in procurement of hotels and the services required to support people under the direction to detain, I don't underestimate the complexity of this task in the current environment. It will be vital that DHHS make the operational decisions in regards to which hotels we utilise and when, along with other decisions which require a risk assessment by the Chief Health Officer or delegated Authorised Officer...²⁶

78. At 5.29pm on the same day, Claire Febey emailed Jason Helps and I, confirming DJPR's plans for the next 24 hours, including what matters would be escalated to us, and stating that the next day she would commence planning with us and the team to clarify roles and responsibilities in the first instance, and then a transition to ongoing arrangements.²⁷

79. From 30 March to 1 April 2020, inclusive, I worked with Claire Febey and the other agencies involved in the Program in relation to clarifying some roles and responsibilities of the agencies. There was a need for clarity at this time, and the development of the agencies' respective roles and responsibilities was an ongoing process, as it was the very early stages of the Program. The agencies were addressing identified issues and were revising their roles and responsibilities throughout this process, as well as working together to respond to matters.²⁸

80. This was part of my role within the SCC and under direction of the State Controller – Health and DHHS State Agency Commander, to coordinate the agencies working together, escalate issues raised, and ensure that they were able to address the parameters of their roles and responsibilities, to allow for those matters to be clarified.

²⁶ DELW.0001.0020.1628.

²⁷ DELW.0001.0020.1628.

²⁸ DELW.0001.0011.1189; DELW.0001.0020.1864.

81. My handover notes dated 1 April 2020 identify my understanding of the structure that was agreed upon as a result of this work, which reflected the transition plan referenced in Jason Helps email, and how some of the roles and responsibilities were transitioning:

- Border Force / DHHS working together air side to get passengers disembarked, given them direction notice (legal process) and information on what is happening next.
- Dept Tpt / Skybus providing transport solution, with Vicpol oversight of security to move travellers to accommodation venues.
- DJPR managing passenger flow into hotels, with DHHS managing compliance and undertaking of direction notice.
- DJPR providing logistics of accommodation venue – concierge / general queries, security staff, cleaning and catering staff – all under guidance of DHHS of tasking and safety requirements. As well as managing packages being delivered for travellers now confined to rooms.
- DHHS in control of accommodation venues, with specific requirements around provision of health and mental health wellbeing services (nurse on site), Authorised officer on site (effectively as division commander in our terminology) they have over all control of venue and direct/make decisions on behalf of DHHS. There is also requirements of daily contact being made with each person as part of the direction notice.²⁹

82. This 'transition plan' assisted in the development of the model identified on page 23 of the Operation Soteria Plan, dated 26 April 2020 (Version 2.0).³⁰

83. I was also separately involved with a later transition involving Pam Williams.³¹ My role was to assist with interoperability and emergency management coordination as Operation Soteria transitioned from the SCC to the DHHS EOC. However, this was a separate transition to the one referenced by Jason Helps in his email dated 29 March 2020. I describe my part in this process in response to question 6, above.

²⁹ DELW.0001.0020.0450.

³⁰ DELW.0001.0020.1474.

³¹ DELW.0001.0020.0495.

Q23. Did you experience any difficulty in the timely receipt of information that you needed for the performance of your role? If so,

(a) what was that difficulty;

(b) what impact if any did it have on the performance of your role: and

(c) what action was taken to resolve that difficulty.

84. In the first few days, I was not receiving the daily manifest of information from Canberra. Once I identified this issue, I requested to be added to the contact list. This was done in a timely manner.

85. My first few days included obtaining information from the relevant agencies and being added to groups and contact or distribution lists, to ensure that information was sourced and shared between the agencies and with me, where appropriate. I did not experience any difficulty in the timely receipt of information that I needed to perform my role.

Q24. Did you identify or experience any confusion in who was responsible for performing those functions? If so,

(a) what was that confusion;

(b) what impact, if any, did it have on how that function was performed; and

(c) what action was taken to resolve that confusion.

86. In answering this question, I understand that it refers to 'those functions' in question 15(b), which in turn refers to the 'agency roles' described in question 14. As I stated in response to question 14, I was not briefed on these specific roles *within* agencies when I commenced.

87. With regards to the respective agencies themselves, the roles and responsibilities of the agencies were clarified and revised. In my response to question 22, above, I address key matters which might be described as confusion over agency roles. This predominantly related to clarification of roles and responsibilities at the very early stages of the Program.

88. It is possible that I identified other instances of confusion in who was responsible for performing those functions, or that such a matter may have been raised with me at meetings or in email communications that I can no longer specifically recall.

Other information

Q25. If you wish to include any additional information in your witness statement, please set it out below.

89. Not applicable.

Signature: 

Printed name: CHRISTOPHER BRETT EAGLE

Date: 11 September 2020