

Date:17/08/2020

Place: Melbourne

#### LIST OF QUESTIONS FOR ISHU GUPTA

# Witness statement for Ishu Gupta response to NTP 059 on Behalf of The Security Hub Pty Ltd.

1. What is your title and role within The Security Hub Pty Ltd?

Title: Managing Director

Role: As one of the Director in The Security Hub Pty Ltd my role is in-charge of the company business to make strategic decisions and look at overall running of the business to ensure company operates at the highest possible standards and in compliance with applicable government regulations.

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

I have been running businesses from last 5 years and as a director at The Security Hub for close to 4 years. As a business professional, I have also been working overseas with my family businesses in the past. Overall, I have been in professional employment and also in business for more than 15 years.

#### The Security Hub Pty Ltd

- When was your business first licensed as a private security business in Victoria?
   27/01/2017
- 4. What are the usual services provided by your business?

We provide labour hire service for security services which is providing Unarmed Guards, Crowd Controllers and also customer service event staff as required by the clients.

5. What is your business' usual client profile?

We have been providing our services mainly to MSS for more than 3.5 years servicing wide range of MSS clients which are Major Events, Retail, Corporate, Distribution Centers, Hospitals, Detention Centers, Family Courts, Concierge, Asset Protection and also monitoring unauthorized entries to premises. We have also provided one off services to Wilson Security at Hotel Quarantine program at Pan Pacific Hotel for close to 3 weeks.

6. To what extent, prior to the Hotel Quarantine Program, had your business provided security services to the Victorian government, whether directly or via subcontracting or labour hire arrangements?

As mentioned in Question 5 majority of our services are provided to MSS clients through sub-contracting arrangement with MSS. We have provided our services at MSS government client sites as per below:

- Casey Hospital
- Federal Court



- Detention Centers
- Family Court
- DHHS Housing Towers
- 7. On what basis (employee/contractor/other) do you engage staff to perform security services?

We hire staff on employee basis and depending upon the requirement of the site and contract duration these could be casual, part time or permanent employees.

8. How many permanent employees did you have as at 27 March 2020?

As of 27/03/2020, we had 15 permanent employees as majority of work is supplying adhoc services and at that date we had 822 casual staff members that have been working for us in the past 4 years on casual basis.

9. Which office holders within your business themselves hold private security licences?

Ishu Gupta (Managing Director)
Aman Chopra (Managing Director)

(Business Manager)
(Operations Co-Ordinator)

10. How do you ordinarily recruit staff?

We have our internal recruitment process which we follow and most of our staff members are recruited on referral basis from our current employees and we also advertise and recruit via social media via Facebook company page/LinkedIn company page and other recruitment sites like Indeed and Jora. We interview our staff members at our office via appointment but during the Covid-19 restrictions we were taking phone interviews to access the suitability of the applicants before offering them a role.

11. Are staff employed or engaged by your business under any restriction on accepting work from other security businesses?

We don't have any restrictions for our staff members to be working for other security businesses as majority of the workforce is causal.

# Your company's involvement in the Hotel Quarantine Program

12. At which hotels, and for which government security contractor, did your business provide security staff? For each hotel please include details of the time period within which you provided security staff.

Services start	Services finish	Government
Date	Date	Contractor
29/04/2020	17/06/2020	MSS Security
6/04/2020	10/072020	MSS Security
30/04/2020	2/07/2020	MSS Security
10/04/2020	25/04/2020	MSS Security
3/04/2020	23/04/2020	Wilson Security
	29/04/2020 6/04/2020 30/04/2020 10/04/2020	Date Date  29/04/2020 17/06/2020  6/04/2020 10/072020  30/04/2020 2/07/2020 10/04/2020 25/04/2020



13. When and how did your business first become aware that there was to be a role for private security companies in the Hotel Quarantine System?

We were contacted by Wilson Security on 01/04/2020 about the use of private security companies at Hotel Quarantine System at Pan Pacific Hotel starting 03/04/2020 and they discussed if we wanted to provide manpower services at Hotel Quarantine program. We were also contacted by MSS security on 05/04/2020 to supply security services at Hotel Quarantine System starting 06/04/2020.

14. When and how did your business first reach an agreement to participate in the provision of security services in the Hotel Quarantine Program?

As per response and dates mentioned in Question number 13 and the agreement to start services was reached with Wilson's on 02/04/2020 and with MSS on 05/04/2020.

15. When was that agreement formalised in writing? If you had agreements with more than one of the government-contracted security companies, give details of all agreements.

Wilson Security Agreement was formalized on 31/03/2020 for the provision of the supply of manpower for Wilson clients as we were already in commercial discussion with Wilson's prior to the onset of Hotel Quarantine Program.

As for MSS security, we have an ongoing agreement in place to supply of the manpower services for their various clients from 28/02/2017 and the current version of the agreement was renewed again on 01/09/2019.

16. What precisely were the security services you agreed to provide under each agreement?

We were requested to provide security officers at various client sites as per the site brief provided by Head Contractor.

17. When and how [if at all] were you first provided with the terms of the head contract entered into by the government contractor with whom you had made an agreement to provide security services?

We received POC from Wilson Security on 04/05/2020 via email. Refer to attachment "POC Q Hotel Acknowledgement Form TSH.pdf" and "POC Q Statement of Compliance TSH.pdf"

We received POC from MSS Security on 10/06/2020 via email. Refer to NTP 015 attachment TSH.0003.0001.0001

- 18. Did you engage subcontractors or labour hire companies to provide any of the security services you had contracted with the government contractor to provide? If so, give details of No.
  - (a) the firms engaged; N/A
  - (b) the hotels at which those firms provided services; and N/A



(c) the dates on which those firms provided services. N/A

# The hotels at which your business provided security services

- 19. For each hotel at which your business provided security services, please state -
  - (a) the number of persons rostered to each shift;

	Average Number of Persons	
	Rostered	
Site	each day	
Four Points Sheraton, 443 Docklands Dr, Docklands VIC		
3008	10	
Park Royal Hotel ( Arrival Drive, Melbourne Airport,		
Tullmarine)	24	
STAMFORD HOTEL (111 Little Collins St, Melbourne VIC		
3000)	69	
Travellodge (66 Aurora Ln, Docklands)	28	
PAN PACIFIC HOTEL SOUTH WHARF (WILSON SECURITY)	29	
* Detailed break down by Shifts each day in attached Exce	l .	

Detailed Breakdown response for Question 19 (a) (b) NTP059 TSH.xlsx

(b) the number of shifts per day; and

Site	Average shifts each day*
Four Points Sheraton, 443 Docklands Dr, Docklands VIC	
3008	10
Park Royal Hotel ( Arrival Drive, Melbourne Airport,	
Tullmarine)	24
STAMFORD HOTEL (111 Little Collins St, Melbourne VIC	
3000)	69
Travellodge (66 Aurora Ln, Docklands)	28
PAN PACIFIC HOTEL SOUTH WHARF (WILSON SECURITY)	29
* Detailed break down by Shifts each day in attached Excel	

Detailed Breakdown response for Question 19 (a) (b) NTP059 TSH.xlsx

(c) the duties of the staff rostered for each shift.

When we engaged in this program to supply services to Head contractors Wilsons and MSS, we were advised by our Head Contractor's that security officer's duties are to support the Authorized Officers from DHHS to maintain the safety of the quarantine guests and also who they interact with. Security officers were also advised that Quarantine guests were not allowed to leave the grounds of the Hotel during the duration of their quarantine period at the daily brief held on site. They were also advised not to make physical contact with quarantine guests and also if any dispute arises then escalate to authorized officer or supervisor on that day. Security staff were also advised that they do not deliver food to the rooms and do not assist with quarantine guests' bags or luggage. The main duty was to monitor that no guest in quarantine leave or comes out of their rooms.

Please see attached the initial brief for the core duties received by TSH from Wilson's security at the onset of the program. (Attachment name: "Wilson Security COVID-19 2020 Quarantine Operation Pan Pacific")

As this program was evolving the duties of security officers were also changing, security officers were later advised by the Authorised officers on site to accompany quarantine guests for fresh air walks/smoke breaks and also assist with food deliveries (UberEATS Etc.) and also assist quarantine guests



with luggage handling at the day of their check out from Hotel as per information provided in NTP 015 attachment TSH.0005.0002.001 ,TSH.0001.0003.0001, TSH.0001.0004.0001

20. Did the numbers of persons and shifts or the nature of the duties change over time? If so, please detail the nature of those changes.

Yes, number of persons and shifts were changing as per the requirement provided by Head Contractors as these numbers' dependent on the occupancy of the Hotel and also the flight/guests arrivals at last minutes or adhoc requests from our Head Contractors. As per the response provided in NTP015 and also in Question 19 (c) As this program was evolving the duties of security officers were also changing, security officers were later advised by the Authorised officers on site to accompany quarantine guests for fresh air walks/smoke breaks and also assist with food deliveries (UberEATS Etc.) and also assist quarantine guests with luggage handling at the day of their check out from Hotel as per information provided in NTP 015 attachment TSH.0005.0002.001 ,TSH.0001.0003.0001, TSH.0001.0004.0001

21. How were decisions made about the number of staff to be rostered on?

These decisions were made at the Head Contractors level and we were only advised about the revised roster requirements for day to day operation during the duration of the program by the Head contractor.

What licences were the staff you engaged or authorised to be engaged required to hold in order to be engaged? What records were kept of those licences?

All our staff members were required to have Victorian Security License unarmed guard. We kept copies of all the staff members security licenses on files.

# **Training and Supervision**

23. What if any training was provided to your staff by DHHS, DJPR or any other government department regarding COVID-19 and how to work in a safe manner?

We were requested by our Head Contractors to get all our staff members who were engaged to work at Hotel quarantine to complete COVID-19 online infection control training module. To our knowledge there is no other training provided by DHHS, DJPR or any other government department but on 23/06/2020 we were advised by our Head Contractor MSS security that there is on-site hand hygiene and PPE training organized by DHHS on 24/06/2020 for staff members working at Stamford Hotel.

24. What if any training was provided to your staff by the government contractor that engaged you regarding COVID-19 and how to work in a safe manner?

As per our response in Question 23 of we were requested by our Head Contractors to get all our staff members who were engaged to work at quarantine Hotels to complete COVID-19 online infection control training module. We were also provided PPE instructions from our Head Contractor time to time and these instructions were distributed by us to our staff members as and when received during the program.

25. What if any training did your business require your own staff to undergo regarding COVID-19 and how to work



in a safe manner? In your answer please make any necessary distinction between:

(a) Staff directly engaged by your business; and

We also instructed our staff members to complete COVID-19 online Infection control module. In addition to this during the time of this assignment we were sending multiple messages to our staff members on regular basis to advise them about the hand hygiene and also PPE instructions were sent via SMS and links to our staff members which were provided by MSS. We also sent group notifications from our Rostering system to inform the officers about the importance hand hygiene and mental health during this time. We also sent the messages for luggage handling instructions to all our staff members which were provided by MSS. We have also sent the message to our staff members about no car polling at later stage when an outbreak was confirmed at Stamford Plaza. On top of this Our Business manager was always on site at Pan Pacific Hotel and Stamford Hotel to sign in staff members to ensure the compliance of the officers via checking their security licenses who were signing in and reconciling the number of rostered shifts and also the number of staff members attended and was regularly in touch with our staff members about the importance hand hygiene, social distance and PPE. We have attached the information sheet attachment name: "Personal Hygiene Checklist at Pan Pacific Provided by TSH to Staff.pdf".

Also, as per our response in NTP 015 attachment please refer to TSH.0005.0001.0001, TSH.0005.0003.0001, TSH.0005.0005.0001, TSH.0005.0007.0001

(b) Staff engaged by subcontractors and labour hire companies.

All the staff was engaged directly by The Security Hub Pty Ltd.

26. What onsite supervision was in place for your business' security staff at each hotel? Was that supervision provided by you or by the government contractor that engaged you?

The onsite Security staff supervision was provided by MSS and Wilsons at Hotel Quarantine program at Stamford plaza (Night Shift Security Supervisor), park royal (Night Shift Security Supervisor) and Pan pacific (Morning and night shift security supervisor) our Senior Security staff was requested to undertake the supervisor role to ensure the continuity of the services. As supervisor was requested to take instructions and guidance from DHHS authorized officers for any decision making with the operation of each Hotel.

The overall supervision of Hotel operations was provided by govt contractor i.e. Head Contractor.

- 27. In cases where some of the staff on duty at a hotel quarantine site were engaged by your business, and some by the government contractor;
  - (c) which business or person had responsibility for onsite supervision?
    Government Contractor i.e.: Head Contractor
  - (d) Which business had responsibility for PPE?
     To our knowledge Head Contractor was the responsible party to provide PPE.
- 28. In cases where all of the security staff on duty were engaged by your business, did your business provide onsite supervision?



In every Hotel where we provide services there were at least one other sub-contractor or Head Contractor direct staff working. As per our response in Question 26 we did have Senior Security staff supervising security staff members working under the guidance and directions from Authorized officers.

29. If you engaged further subcontractors or labour hire companies, what role did they play in supervision of the staff provided by them?
Not applicable

#### Rosters and salary arrangements

- 30. Who in your business was responsible for the recruiting and rostering of staff?

  Our Business manager was responsible for recruiting and rostering of staff at Hotels and he also visited Pan Pacific and Stamford Hotel on daily basis to check the compliance/security licenses of staff members working at these Hotels to ensure only the compliant/rostered staff members were signing on for duty.
- 31. How were the staff you provided for the quarantine program sourced and recruited?

  We have our internal recruitment process which we follow and most of our staff members are recruited on referral basis from our current employees and we also advertise and recruit via social media via Facebook company page.

  We interview our staff members at our office via appointment but during the Covid-19 restrictions we were taking phone interviews to access the suitability of the applicants before offering them a role.
- 32. What factors were relevant to how frequently staff were rostered on?

  Depending on the rosters sent by our Head Contractors for numbers of shifts required to filled at Hotels the below factors were considered before staff were rostered on.
  - Availability of staff member
  - Nature of the duties for specific roles
  - Fatigue management
  - Specific Staff request from Head Contractors
- 33. What records were kept of hours worked?

We use rostering system Guardhouse in which we roster our staff members and all shift records for each site are kept in that Rostering System. These records were further validated through the excel spreadsheets received from Head Contractors in order to reconcile and ensure there is no unreconciled shifts between our rostering system and Head Contractor excel spreadsheet.



34. What were the applicable hourly rates of pay for the security staff you provided?

Confidential data not to be made Public due to commercial reasons. Information only for Inquiry Purposes															
					Payroll Tax		Woi	kcover							
					(Super		er+	(Super+		Portable LSL		Adm	nin and		
			F		Pay per		Pay	per 1.80% of Pa		% of Pay	Overheads				
	Pay pe	r Hour	Sup	er	Hour Rate )		Hou	r Rate )	per Hour		8% Pay per				
Security Hub Pay Rates	rate		9.5%	6	4.859	%	2.80	1%	Rate		Hou	r rate	Cost	To company	
Day Rate Per Hour	\$	27.38	\$	2.60	\$	1.45	\$	0.11	\$	0.49	\$	2.19	\$	34.23	
Night Rate Per Hour	\$	27.42	\$	2.60	\$	1.46	\$	0.11	\$	0.49	\$	2.19	\$	34.28	
Saturday Rate Per Hour	\$	33.80	\$	3.21	\$	1.80	\$	0.14	\$	0.61	\$	2.70	\$	42.26	
Sunday Rate Per Hour	\$	45.06	\$	4.28	\$	2.39	\$	0.19	\$	0.81	\$	3.60	\$	56.34	
Public Holiday Per Hour	Ś	56.33	Ś	5.35	Ś	2.99	Ś	0.23	Ś	1.01	Ś	4.51	Ś	70.43	

35. How were security staff paid?

Staff members were paid on fortnight basis via EFT.

36. To your knowledge were any security staff engaged by you at one hotel quarantine site also working at any other hotel quarantine site and/or for other security contractors?

We are not aware of this as per our knowledge.

37. What if any fee or remuneration was paid to your company in addition to the actual salary costs of the staff you provided?

There was no additional fee or remuneration paid to our company. We were only paid for the actual hours supplied as per the hourly agreed rate with our Head Contractors.

# Personal protective equipment

- What PPE was provided by your business for staff use?All the PPE was provided onsite by Head Contractors or DHHS.
- 39. What PPE was provided by the government contractor to your business' security staff for use? Gloves, Hand sanitizers and Face Masks were provided on site for all security staff to use.
- 40. What PPE was provided by DHHS or any other government department? To our knowledge all the PPE was provided on site by Head Contractor not sure if that PPE provided from DHHS or government department.
- 41. Were your staff at any time required to provide their own PPE? At no point staff were requested to provide their own PPE.
- What training was given to your staff regarding the correct use of PPE? Who provided that training?

  Staff were given onsite briefing before starting their shifts which were provided by Security Supervisors.

  On multiple occasions we were also sent updated PPE instructions from Head Contractors that were shared by us with the staff from time to time as received.
- 43. Did your business at any time experience a shortage of PPE? If so, how was that shortage managed?

To our knowledge there was no shortage of PPE at the sites.

We were never advised by our staff that there is any shortage at any of the Hotels.



44. What if any arrangements were in place at the hotels for which you had responsibility for temperature checking of security staff? Who instituted and monitored any such arrangement?

To our knowledge there was no temperature testing conducted at any of the Hotels for Security Staff at the onset of the program.

To my knowledge onsite wellbeing health assessment and temperature checks were being performed by DHHS nurses on site at the commencement of every shift after the outbreak at Stamford plaza.

#### Complaints and concerns

Who was responsible for identifying and acting on instances of poor or unacceptable conduct by your security staff?

Any act of poor or unacceptable conduct was handled onsite supervisor in regards to poor uniform or compliance or any other matters.

46. Who was responsible for identifying and acting on complaints or concerns regarding unsafe work conditions for your security staff?

Security Supervisor or Head Contractor were the responsible parties for identifying any concerns or unsafe work conditions and then our business manager was coordinating with the Head Contractor in order to act on those complaints or concerns.

47. Did your business identify or receive notice of poor or unacceptable conduct by any of your security staff? How were those issues dealt with?

We were advised by MSS security that our supervisor is over friendly with nurses at the Hotel and spend too much time talking to nurses on site. Our Business manager had then spoken to the concerned staff member about the nature of this operation and advised him not to be over friendly and limit the conversation with the nurses at professional level and once the information was passed to the concerned staff member we never received any further complaint about this staff member.

We also received a complaint from one of our security officers which was provided to the Inquiry as per our response in NTP 015 attachment TSH.0006.0001.0001.

48. Did you terminate the services of, remove from site, or otherwise take action against any and which of the security personnel you engaged directly for unsatisfactory performance of their duties at quarantine hotels? If yes provide details of

To my knowledge: No, we never came to situation we have to take such an action to terminate a guard.

(e) who was so terminated, removed or acted against and when; and?



Not Applicable

- (f) the nature of the unsatisfactory behavior concerned.Not Applicable
- 49. Did your business identify or receive notice of unsafe work conditions for your security staff? How were those issues dealt with?

We received a complaint from one of our security officers which was provided to the Inquiry as per our response in NTP 015 attachment TSH.0006.0001.0001 and the issue was dealt as per the response in NTP 015 as per attachment TSH.0006.0002.0001.

50. Did any security staff employed or engaged by your business contract COVID-19 in the course of their work in the Hotel Quarantine Program? If so,

Yes, we had staff who contracted COVID-19

- (g) what were the circumstances in which they came to contract it;
  As per my discussions with impacted staff members that contracted COVID-19, they believed that they contracted the virus from a co-worker working at Stamford Plaza.
- (h) how and when did your business become aware of it; and I was first informed on 17/06/2020 morning via email by our Head Contractor MSS that one of our staff members tested positive to COVID-19. Refer to email attachment "FW Stamford plaza.msg"
- (i) what steps were taken by your business in response?

  As soon as we were aware of the COVID-19 positive case we extracted all the rosters from 01/06/2020 for Stamford Plaza along with their contact numbers and shared these details with our Head Contractor MSS.

  Refer to email attachment "RE: Positive Covid 19 Test 2.msg
  - We also spoke to concerned staff member regarding the timeline of symptoms, test and confirmation of positive result and also requested the officer to self-isolate and adhere to the DHHS instructions. Refer to email attachment "RE: Positive Covid 19 Test.msg"
  - We were also advised by Night shift that the staff attending the night shift at Stamford Plaza on 16/06/2020 and morning shift on 17/06/2020 had been tested on site and advised to go in selfisolation for 14 days. Refer to email attachment "FW Positive Covid 19 Test.msg"
  - We were advised by our Head Contractor MSS to notify all the staff members who worked at Stamford Plaza from 01/06/2020 to go in Self isolation.
  - We were provided a first letter by our Head Contractor MSS which were drafted by DHHS with all
    the instruction for next steps which staff member have to adhere too. We sent this letter to all
    our staff members via email who were identified as per rosters from 01/06/2020 and asked them
    to wait for further instructions. Refer to email attachment "Positive Covid 19 Test.msg and
    Attachment Stamford Plaza letter.pdf in the email"
  - We were also provided a second letter by our Head Contractor MSS which was also drafted by DHHS with the instructions for the staff at testing centers to expedite the test results. We sent this letter to all our staff members via email who were identified as per rosters from 01/06/2020



and asked them to show this letter at the testing center for expediting results. Refer to email attachment "FW Stamford Hotel - urgent.msg"

- We also provided a spreadsheet with the details of our staff members for contact tracing to our Head Contractor MSS as requested by DHHS. Refer to email attachment "RE Positive Covid 19 Test 1762020.msg"
- We also shared spreadsheets with daily updates around the testing results of each and every staff member on that list with our Head Contractor MSS. Refer to email attachment "RE DJPR Test Register- Version 1 Date 18062020 at 1547.msg"
- Any staff member who was tested positive for COVID-19 was personally contacted on daily basis till they got their clearance from DHHS to ensure their safety and mental well-being.
- As an employer we provided \$250 one off payment to initial staff members who tested positive to COVID-19 for food delivery so they can adhere to their self-isolation conditions and avoid any further spreading of virus outside.
- Our Business Manager was also regularly contacting all the staff members who were requested to self iso-late via text or calls or emails to ensure the well being and mental health of these staff members and also, they are adhering to DHHS instructions.
- After the initial outbreak was identified at Stamford Hotel and we were requested to deploy the staff members whose last shift was before 01/06/2020 that were fresh crew.
- All staff members were also requested to watch a YouTube video on how easily germs spread and effectiveness of gloves which was sent to us by our Head Contractor MSS.
- To my knowledge All staff members were provided a copy of the guidelines on site, which they
  must read and understand.
- To my knowledge, onsite interactive training session was provided by DHHS.
- We also requested our staff members to No Car Pooling.
- Guards rosters were limited to possibly one site to avoid cross contamination.
- Pre-Shift acceptance questionnaire regarding feeling unwell or any flu like symptoms were also introduced for officers to advise.
- To my knowledge onsite wellbeing health assessment and temperature checks were being performed by DHHS nurses on site at the commencement of every shift after the outbreak.

#### Additional information

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

We would like to thank the enquiry for giving us an opportunity to respond and I would also like to bring to this Inquiry's attention that all the parties involved in Hotel quarantine program were aligned to one and only one



goal in ensuring that the spread of the virus is controlled and the health and safety of all Victorian's was upheld with the actions taken during the ongoing program.

It was unfortunate that the outbreaks are speculated to be associated with the Hotel quarantine program and the security staff providing first line of defense for all Victorian's are being blamed by the media outlets without any concrete evidence pertaining to the same without waiting for the Inquiry to share their findings.

As a business owner and Victorian I am really disappointed that the first responders that provided services at the hotels have not been given the due share of credit for their efforts at the front line and instead being blamed for the spread of the Virus.

While I would agree that the Inquiry might find some deficiencies during the program and how it was managed but as this was un precedented situation without any rule book I believe the efforts of all involved have been depicted in negative light by unfair media coverage around this program.

There were real people involved in providing services that were doing so to provide protection to Victorians and provide for their families in these hard times.

Unfortunately, the human side of those impacted mentally and financially has never been once discussed in this whole program instead all the negative associations have been out in the news about the program.

The lessons learnt for us as a business and all involved is that that although we responded to this pandemic with a view of providing safety for all Victorian's being at the front line and that this has been a "Thankless job".

I welcome the steps taken by Victorian government to provide answers for all Victorians by setting up this Hotel Quarantine Inquiry and would like to assure the Inquiry that we as business fully support and are committed to assist the Inquiry in finding those causes by providing any information requested during the course of the Inquiry.

Regards,



Ishu Gupta

**Managing Director** 

The Security Hub Pty Ltd