

CORONAVIRUS — HOTEL QUARANTINE CONTRACT — HEALTHCARE AUSTRALIA

156. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the state government's Quarantine Advisory Panel established last Thursday and today's announcement that WA's hotel quarantine arrangements would be outsourced to Healthcare Australia to provide end-to-end health support services, including all general practitioners, nurses and nursing assistants.

- (1) Has the Quarantine Advisory Panel met to provide advice to government on this matter?
- (2) If not, why not?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) For the record, I make it clear to members of Parliament exactly what the announcement with regard to hotel quarantining healthcare arrangements involved. The Department of Health, utilising the services of the East Metropolitan Health Service, has been working with Healthcare Australia throughout the global pandemic experience to provide healthcare services to guests in our hotels. That includes a team of nurses and doctors who essentially provide primary care for all guests in the event that they need attention. Healthcare Australia has been working throughout this period as part of that team.

As a result of the ongoing pressures that we continue to experience in our hospitals and the demands in particular in relation to the workforce, it was considered appropriate that we make sure that all our nurses who are currently working as part of the East Metropolitan Health Service team but in our hotel quarantine system should be redeployed back onto the front line, making sure that we have as many people as possible involved in our health system. I stress that this does not mean that we have outsourced the security, administration or oversight of hotel quarantine; it is simply that healthcare component, which, as I said, is primarily a primary healthcare function. The decision has been made that we will take those nurses and put them back in our health system. It has not been subject to advice from the Quarantine Advisory Panel. It is pretty commonsense that we should make sure that as many of our doctors and nurses as possible are made available to our health system and continue to provide good wraparound services for hotel guests.