

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings.

Portfolio:	Coordination of Jobs, Precincts and Regions - COVID-19
Witness:	Secretary
Committee Member:	Ms Bridget Vallence asked to the Secretary
Page/s of transcript:	24

Relevant text:

Ms VALLENCE: Secretary Phemister, has the department engaged any legal representation for the purposes of responding to the Coate inquiry?

Mr PHEMISTER: We have, Ms Vallence.

Ms VALLENCE: You have? Can you advise how much money has been spent so far and what is your expected total budget?

Mr PHEMISTER: I cannot, Ms Vallence. As Ms Peake indicated yesterday, it will be funded through our internal legal—

Ms VALLENCE: Can you make that available to the committee, please?

Mr PHEMISTER: As soon as it becomes available.

Answer:

DJPR has engaged Corrs Chambers Westgarth to support the department's in-house lawyers for purposes relating to the COVID-19 Hotel Quarantine Inquiry.

DJPR's contract with Corrs Chambers Westgarth is commercial-in-confidence.

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings.

Portfolio / Group:	Minister Pakula
Witness:	Secretary
Committee Member:	Mr Danny O'Brien
Page/s of transcript:	13

Relevant text:

Mr D O'BRIEN: Minister or Secretary, could the committee please be provided with a copy of that (the State Control Centre) operational plan from 28 March that you referenced earlier?

Answer:

The (State Control Centre) operational plan is an Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) plan. EMV is not an agency of DJPR and therefore it is not appropriate for DJPR to provide this plan to the committee.

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings.

Portfolio / Group:	Minister Pakula
Witness:	Secretary
Committee Member:	Ms Vallence
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Relevant text:

Ms VALLENCE: Thank you. Minister, you confirmed that it was your department's role to source accommodation, and it was also your department's role to source and procure security companies to ensure that travellers remained locked down. Can you please advise how many security guards in total worked in the hotel quarantine program?

Mr PAKULA: Again, that level of detail in terms of numbers, I will ask the Secretary to deal with it. You will get a more accurate assessment from Secretary Phemister.

Mr PHEMISTER: And I will start by apologising; I cannot give you that precise number today.

Ms VALLENCE: Can you take it on notice, Mr Phemister? Thank you.

Answer:

Throughout the course of the hotel quarantine program, security staff numbers at individual hotels were adjusted based on arrival/exit numbers at those hotels on each day.

DJPR is undertaking a review of the security services provided under the contracts, with the cooperation of each of the security companies and their legal representatives. The number of security guards that worked on the hotel quarantine program will be finalised as part of this review.

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings.

Portfolio / Group:	Minister Pakula
Witness:	Minister Pakula
Committee Member:	Ms Vallence
Page/s of transcript:	22 -23

Relevant text:

Ms VALLENCE: Okay. Minister, you mentioned earlier in an answer \$80 million from consolidated revenue for the accommodation. Has that been spent so far or is that the total budget?

Mr PAKULA: Again, I cannot speak to how much has been spent to date, but what I—

Ms VALLENCE: Can you take that notice?

Mr PAKULA: Indeed.

Answer:

\$80 million was for the total budget allocated for accommodation as part of government's hotel quarantine and 'Hotel for Heroes' programs. As these programs are still underway the total expenditure has not been finalised at this time.

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings.

Portfolio / Group:	Minister Pakula
Witness:	Secretary
Committee Member:	Ms Vallence
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Relevant text:

Ms VALLENCE: Thank you. Could you also provide copies of the contracts to the accommodation—make them available to the committee?

Mr PAKULA: I think that is one where I will defer to the Secretary.

Ms VALLENCE: Just take it on notice; that will be fine.

Mr PAKULA: We will provide that information which we can.

Answer:

Contract information will be released according to the standard contract reporting processes.

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings.

Portfolio:	Employment
Witness:	Minister Pakula
Committee Member:	Mr Sam Hibbins
Page/s of transcript:	16

Relevant text:

Mr HIBBINS: Minister, you have indicated I think, from what the Treasurer's update was, that unemployment would hit around 11 per cent. Do you have a forecast for youth unemployment and what level that will hit—and what it currently is now?

Mr PAKULA: Look, I do not have that in front of me, Mr Hibbins. It might well be that there are some Treasury estimates that go to that question. Given that the Treasurer, as I understand it, only released the updated estimates this morning, they are not in my current possession.

Mr HIBBINS: Are you able to provide that on notice to the committee?

Mr PAKULA: Indeed.

Answer:

The Treasurer's presentation to PAEC on 12 August 2020 included updated economic forecasts from the Department of Treasury and Finance, including that the unemployment rate is forecast to rise from 7.5 per cent in June to 11 per cent in the September quarter. A forecast for youth unemployment is not available, however the latest data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) monthly Labour Force Survey show the unemployment rate in Victoria is 6.8% in July, down from 7.5% in June 2020 (data in seasonally adjusted terms).

- For all Victorian youth age 15-24 years, the unemployment rate is 15.8% in July, down from 16.5% in June 2020 (data in original terms).
- For Victorian youth age 15-24 years not attending full-time education, the unemployment rate is 13.0% in July, down from 15.1% in June 2020 (data in original terms).

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings.

Portfolio / Group:	Employment
Witness:	Minister Pakula
Committee Member:	Mr Sam Hibbins
Page/s of transcript:	16-17

Relevant text:

Mr HIBBINS: Thank you. There is unemployment, but there is also participation in the workforce. Do you anticipate major changes to workforce participation, particularly, for example, from women who may simply just opt out of the workforce?

Mr PAKULA: Well, again, Mr Hibbins, I have been doing my level best during this hearing to assist the committee. That modelling will be modelling that is done by Treasury, and if the committee has a desire for me to provide that information on notice, I will seek that information and provide it. I would say that normally when there is an economic event of this nature it does change the profile of the workforce in some respects, in terms of the sorts of industries people engage in. We know that during the pandemic there has been, I think, a disproportionate impact on women and young people, particularly as a consequence of the industries that have been most affected—whether that be hospitality or tourism accommodation—and so there is a strong emphasis, in terms of the work that we are doing, to redress some of those inequalities.

Mr HIBBINS: Terrific. If that information could be provided on notice, I think that would greatly assist the committee.

Answer:

Department of Treasury and Finance forecasting for female labour force participation is not available, however the latest data (in seasonally adjusted terms) from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) monthly Labour Force Survey show, for females in Victoria:

- the unemployment rate is 7.2% in July, up from 5.6% in March 2020
- the labour force participation rate is 59.4% in July, down from 61.6% in March 2020
- the employment to population ratio (civilians aged 15 years and over) is 55.1% in July, down from 58.2% in March 2020.