

Inquiry into the Government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic

Ms Fiona Macdonald

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YOUR SUBMISSION

Submission:

I think the obsession with clarifying who approved the use of private security guards in Victoria's hotel quarantine program is misguided, given NSW, WA, SA and Tasmania all used private guards. It would have been almost impossible to operate the program without them.

The factors that actually caused the problems have been given much less attention than they deserved.

One is the ridiculously lax rules, so different from other states, that allowed people in hotel quarantine to go out to the shops, visit people in hospital, have people in their rooms, refuse covid tests and leave quarantine while still actively infected with Covid. These rules guaranteed community spread.

The second big issue is why police or ADF did not support the program with their presence so that:

- a) there was supervision of guards, who could then have been disciplined or sacked if they were non-compliant and
- b) there was legal power to enforce the rules

The third issue is the supervision of the contracts, to ensure companies contracted were doing what they agreed to do. This was negligible.

The fourth issue is PPE / infection control, and the lack of supplies and training.

The fact that private guards were used is not the problem.

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Signature:

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