

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

Portfolio:	Coordination of Jobs, Precincts and Regions – COVID-19
Witness:	Minister Pakula
Committee Member:	Mr Hibbins
Page/s of transcript:	8

Relevant text:

Mr HIBBINS: Thank you. Based on the last figures that were provided my understanding is about 8900 payments went through university institutions while 21 600 went through private institutions who applied through Study Melbourne. What is the reason for the discrepancy between the two or the difference between the two figures?

Mr PAKULA: I think there was a combination of reasons. Partly it was because some of the public universities had significant welfare programs of their own that they were providing, but it was also about where the preponderance of students were. But we can get you a more detailed breakdown if you would like.

Answer:

The International Student Emergency Relief Fund (ISERF) was modelled on the premise that there would be a greater need from the students of private institutions than public institutions.

As mentioned during the hearing, some public universities had their own welfare programs for students.

The student demographics of private and public institutions are also generally different and it was anticipated that students of private institutions would be more likely to be impacted by loss of work.

This modelling was informed by data and intelligence gathered over years of sector engagement and through the Study Melbourne Student Centre, and the ISERF has performed in line with its initial modelling.

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Relevant text:

Mr HIBBINS: Okay; sure. In terms of Working for Victoria, I believe you have given some figures for the total number of jobs created through Working for Victoria, but are you able to provide the committee—you can take this on notice—more of a breakdown in terms of the length of those actual positions, how long they lasted and how many hours were they for, for example, so the committee would actually have a bit more detail?

Mr PAKULA: I can get you the details on notice if you like.

Answer:

Working for Victoria created more than 11,000 new jobs for Victorians in short-term pandemic-response roles and longer-term six-month roles supporting local communities. Seventy-four per cent of roles created through Working for Victoria are for 6 months or more.

Jobs were created in partnership with local governments, community service organisations and public sector organisations. This has supported Victorians by providing them with an income at a very challenging time while delivering a long-lasting community benefit through activities such as food relief, community outreach and bushfire recovery.

The majority of 6-month roles are full time, but roles are negotiated with grant recipients on a case-by-case basis to provide part time work where appropriate to support jobseekers.

Working for Victoria grants require roles to be paid at the relevant award rate or in line with the existing workplace agreement, whichever is higher, to ensure fair pay and conditions.

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Portfolio / Group:	Coordination of Jobs, Precincts and Regions - COVID-19
Witness:	Secretary
Committee Member:	Mr Danny O'Brien
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Relevant text:

Mr D O'BRIEN: Thank you, Chair. Mr Phemister, I would just like to follow on with some of the questions

we were asking a moment ago. The phone records presented to the hotel quarantine inquiry indicate that you had a conversation at 1.08 between you, Tim Ada from DPC and someone from the Premier's private office. Who was that from the PPO?

Mr PHEMISTER: Thank you, Mr O'Brien. I will have to consult. I am sorry—genuinely. I took over 100 phone calls that day. I will have to consult. At 1.08, did you say? I will have to consult and come back to you.

Mr D O'BRIEN: Okay. It was the subject of some discussion at the hotel quarantine inquiry. It did not jog your memory?

Mr PHEMISTER: I cannot guarantee you about my phone calls at 1.08, I am sorry, as I said here.

Mr D O'BRIEN: Would it usually be your Premier's chief of staff for a high-level discussion like that?

Mr PHEMISTER: No.

Mr D O'BRIEN: Not necessarily. Okay.

Mr PHEMISTER: No, Mr O'Brien. I can clarify that for you. No.

Mr D O'BRIEN: You can clarify; okay. If you can provide any further information on notice, we would be happy for you to do so.

Answer:

I did not have a conversation with Tim Ada or anyone from the Premier's office at 1.08pm. I received a phone call from Tim Ada at 1.11pm. No other person was on the call.

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Witness:	Secretary
Committee Member:	Mr Danny O'Brien
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Relevant text:

Mr D O'BRIEN: Did DJPR either on the 27th or prior to it engage with Trades Hall on any of the contracts it was proposing, whether for Hotels for Heroes or the later quarantine program?

Mr PHEMISTER: Sorry, Mr O'Brien, with regards to those two specific programs? I will have to take that on notice. We were at that point in time sourcing advice from all industry stakeholders across the board. I know we did not for hotel quarantine. I will have to take on notice whether Trades Hall were part of our industry stakeholder groups. But they were advisory groups. We were contacting every peak you could imagine to discuss with them the impacts of Hotels for Heroes on accommodation stock, on catering et cetera, et cetera.

Answer:

DJPR did not engage with Trades Hall on the 27th March or prior to that date in relation to contracts it was proposing for Hotels for Heroes or the Hotel Quarantine Program.

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Portfolio / Group:	Coordination of Jobs, Precincts and Regions - COVID-19
Witness:	Secretary
Committee Member:	Ms Vallence
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Relevant text:

Ms VALLENCE: Secretary, what is the total legal costs paid for DJPR for legal representation during the Coate inquiry?

Mr PHEMISTER: Thanks, Ms Vallence. I do not have the total. The inquiry is still running. I can take it on notice for you.

Ms VALLENCE: Thank you—take it on notice. And, Secretary, perhaps add to that the total legal cost paid for Minister Pakula and his legal representation during the Coate inquiry.

Mr PHEMISTER: Ms Vallence, again, I can take that on notice to see if the department can deliver those to the committee.

Ms VALLENCE: Secretary, the 2019–20 DTF financial report details that from the Treasurer’s advance—\$418 million from the Treasurer’s advance for legal costs associated with litigation for DJPR. Was this all attributable to the legal representation for the hotel quarantine inquiry?

Mr PHEMISTER: I will have to again, Ms Vallence, come back with a breakdown. I can say categorically no, because I am aware of other litigation expenses within the department. I will have to take that on notice.

Ms VALLENCE: Could you provide to the committee, then, the breakdown of that \$418 million from the Treasurer’s advance for legal litigation for DJPR?

Mr PHEMISTER: We publish all of our legal and litigation expenses, so I would be more than happy to do that.

Answer:

In relation to the total legal costs paid for DJPR for legal representation during the Hotel Quarantine Inquiry:

- DJPR has engaged Corrs Chambers Westgarth to support the department’s in-house lawyers for purposes relating to the Board of Inquiry into the COVID-19 Hotel Quarantine Program.
- No payments have yet been made for DJPR’s legal representation during the inquiry. DJPR will be covered by its insurer for all reasonable costs incurred by the external legal team in relation to the Board of Inquiry process.

In relation to the total legal costs paid for Minister Pakula during the Hotel Quarantine Inquiry:

- DJPR does not have access to the total legal costs paid for legal representation for Minister Pakula during the Hotel Quarantine Inquiry

With regard to the Treasurer’s Advance for litigation expenses:

- the amount provided is \$418,000, which was expended in relation to legal costs associated with litigation involving Australian Education City, not the Hotel Quarantine Board of Inquiry process.

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Ms VALLENCE: Okay. And for the \$195 million, can you provide to the committee a breakdown, line by line, of that amount?

Mr PHEMISTER: I am having trouble finding that particular number.

Ms VALLENCE: That is the amount provided to the hotel quarantine inquiry for the cost of the hotel quarantine program.

Mr PHEMISTER: I will have to apologise to the committee. I do not have that number before me so I cannot attest to that number. We did, as part of our submission to the inquiry, break that down by accommodation, consultancies, contractors, incidentals, laundry, onward travel, security, cleaning, airport interface incidentals.

Ms VALLENCE: Could you submit that to this committee?

Mr PHEMISTER: I sure can. It is on the inquiry's website. I would be more than happy to reproduce and submit.

...

Ms VALLENCE: Secretary, how much was paid to Unified Security for hotel quarantine services?

Mr PHEMISTER: Again, we are not making final payments until the forensic audit is complete. We thought that would be the most judicious way forward so that we could make sure that all final invoicing was true and correct. I do not have any accusations in here today; I do not have any evidence as I sit here today to contest invoicing. That will come through the final wrap-up of the report, so as it stands today we have not made final payments to the security firm. So I cannot confirm the final number.

Ms VALLENCE: How much have you paid so far?

Mr PHEMISTER: If you recall, we handed over all contracts as at 30 June. I made projections as at 17 June and those projections are on the inquiry website, which I will happily reproduce as part of the earlier question.

Answer:

The summary breakdown provided to the inquiry is as follows:

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee into the Inquiry of COVID-19 Pandemic Round 3

Spend Category	Initial Budget	YTD Spend	YTD Variance	New Forecast to year end	Forecast Overspend
Accommodation	61,330,137	59,353,471	1,976,666	61,993,134	-662,997
Consultancies	972,877	413,000	559,877	924,616	48,261
Contractors	1,179,094	1,059,354	119,740	1,749,300	-570,207
GSS	2,462,688	2,932,128	-469,440	3,704,422	-1,241,733
Incidentals	1,400,603	671,966	728,636	731,966	668,636
Laundry	242,879	278,753	-35,875	418,130	-175,251
Onward Travel	233,710	467,992	-234,282	596,690	-362,980
Security	38,180,716	39,751,681	-1,570,965	60,282,132	-22,101,415
Cleaning	232,962	0	232,962	100,000	132,962
Grand Total	106,235,666	104,928,345	1,307,321	130,500,390	-24,264,724

The projection provided to the Board of Inquiry in relation to Unified Security is as follows:

ACCOUNT PARTY NAME Contractor:	Total	Forecast to year end	Category
UNIFIED SECURITY GROUP (AUSTRALIA) PTY LTD	28,603,183.87	44,953,183.87	Security