

Questions taken on notice

Portfolio:	Workplace Safety
Witness:	Mr Colin Radford
Committee member:	Mr Richard Riordan
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Relevant text:

Mr RIORDAN: Budget paper 3, page 279—you provided advice at our last lot of hearings that 24 investigations were underway relating to COVID. Twenty-three of them were active at the time, and that was in response. How many investigations are still underway and how many have concluded? If you do not have that handy, I am happy to take that on notice.

Mr RADFORD: Thank you, Mr Riordan. I can provide you with some general statistics in relation to our ongoing investigations. I cannot talk about individual investigations—

Mr RIORDAN: No. Yes, I can understand that.

Mr RADFORD: as you are aware. As at 16 June there were 21 ongoing investigations.

Mr RIORDAN: Are they the same 21 of the original 24?

Mr RADFORD: Yes, so I will go through that. So there are 21 ongoing investigations in relation to COVID-19 transmission. Nine investigations have been concluded; five of those are related to workplaces for food processing essentially. So those nine have concluded without charges being laid. There are Monday, 21 June 2021 Public Accounts and Estimates Committee 5 11 investigations that are currently in the process of legal review, which is the final step before determining whether a prosecution is commenced.

Mr RIORDAN: And those 11, are they government agencies—

Mr RADFORD: I cannot answer that question. I do not know, because, as you are aware, I do not conduct the investigations. I can take that on notice. I am not sure if I will be able to provide—

Mr RIORDAN: If you would please take that on notice—

Mr RADFORD: I will have to check if I can provide it.

Mr RIORDAN: just the breakdown of what industries they have come from.

Mr RADFORD: We can probably do it by industry, yes.

Answer:

Of the matters in review, the industry descriptors associated with the investigations are:

- *Healthcare and social assistance*
- *Construction*
- *Professional, scientific and technical services*
- *Rental, hiring and real estate services*
- *Accommodation and food services.*

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Relevant text:

Mr RIORDAN: My next question is again to you, Mr Radford. Budget paper 3, page 282—and you can take this on notice if you like. For the 2019–20 financial year, and separately the current financial year, how many visits by WorkSafe investigators to both Parkville and Malmsbury youth justice centres have occurred?

Mr RADFORD: Investigators or inspectors, Mr Riordan? I will have to take that question on notice, but—

Mr RIORDAN: Okay. Well, if you can clarify between inspectors or investigators. For each of the financial years and for both sites, how many provisional improvement notices have been issued by WorkSafe?

Mr RADFORD: I do not have that information, Mr Riordan.

Mr RIORDAN: Could you provide that on notice for us?

Mr RADFORD: I will take the question on notice.

Answer:

WorkSafe Inspectors do not issue Provisional Improvement Notices (PIN) under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (OHS Act) these notices are issued by Health and Safety Representatives.

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Relevant text:

Mr RIORDAN: Thank you. And can we please get some data from the visits that you have made for each and every corrections facility in those two financial years—so the other correctional facilities. Can you let us know what improvement notices, if any, have been issued for the last few years?

Mr RADFORD: I will take the question on notice, Mr Riordan.

Answer:

In 2019/2020 WorkSafe conducted 284 visits and enquires to corrections facilities, 105 improvement notices were issued during this period collectively at Victorian correctional facilities.

In 2020/2021 (as at 13 June 2021) WorkSafe has conducted 355 visits and enquiries to Victorian corrections facilities with 57 improvement notices being issued during this period.

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Mr LIMBRICK: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Minister and team, for appearing today. Maybe my question is best directed to Mr Radford: with regard to the improvement notices and prohibition notices, it says in the presentation there were 8700 improvement notices. What proportion of those were COVID compliance related?

Mr RADFORD: I cannot give you a proportion.

Ms STITT: We have got the numbers.

Mr RADFORD: I can give you how many COVID notices have been issued but not as a proportion of overall. So as of 16 June WorkSafe has conducted 18 200 workplace visits related to COVID-19 and issued 926 improvement notices related to the management of the risk of COVID in the workplace.

Mr LIMBRICK: And how many prohibitions have been issued for lack of COVID compliance?

Mr RADFORD: I would have to take that question on notice, Mr Limbrick. I know how many improvement notices there have been. I do not have a breakdown of improvement notices and prohibition.

Mr LIMBRICK: But there have been some businesses shut down because of lack of COVID compliance or—

Mr RADFORD: No, WorkSafe does not shut down a business. What WorkSafe might do is prohibit a certain activity until the risk is appropriately controlled, but WorkSafe does not shut down businesses.

Answer:

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Of the 926 total notices issued, 15 are COVID related Prohibition Notices (data as of 16 June 2021).