

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Inquiry into the Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic
– 18 August 2020

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Defence

Topic: Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 - Q9 - 18 August 2020 - Situation at Aged Care Facilities supported by ADF - Siewert

Question reference number: 9

Senator/Member: Rachel Siewert

Type of question: Spoken

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 01 September 2020

Question:

Senator SIEWERT: With the four facilities that you've either been to or are still in, what state were the facilities in when you went in? What did you find when you were asked to provide support in those facilities?

Rear Adm. Sharkey: To give you a detailed answer, I'd probably need to take that question on notice, but, in essence, these were facilities, broadly speaking, that were facing a workforce crisis in being able to fill shifts in those facilities. Most of them have quite a significant number of COVID-positive cases, where there are concerns for the welfare of those residents unless they can address, in the short term, the workforce deficiencies that we've been asked to fill in terms of the shifts.

Answer:

The Victorian Aged Care Response Centre has gained maturity and conditions have improved within the residential aged care facilities in which the Australian Defence Force (ADF) have provided support.

Epping Gardens:

An ADF team of three registered nurses deployed on 27 July 2020, in response to a critical staff shortage. On arrival they received a handover from an enrolled nurse. At this time, no staff on the night shift were familiar with the facility or the residents, with one agency registered nurse and one agency enrolled nurse on duty.

The staff were informed that 70 residents had tested positive to COVID-19 and the remaining 20 residents were symptomatic. It was apparent that infection control procedures were problematic, requiring remediation as a priority.

Opal South Valley – Highton:

The ADF team observed what they assessed to be a number of breaches of infection prevention and control procedures. After engagement with facility management, specialist advice was sought and these concerns were resolved.

Kalyna Care:

The ADF staff reported relatively stable conditions at this facility in relation to the level of infection and staffing levels.

Japara Goonwarra:

This facility had a stable staffing level and a lower level of infection.