

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Inquiry into Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

27 April 2021

PDR Number: IQ21-000083

How many hotels with adequate ventilation that prevents or minimises aerosol transmission

Spoken

Hansard Page number: 19

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Question:

Senator SIEWERT: From a national perspective, how many facilities are you or the department aware of that have adequate ventilation that prevents or minimises, to the greatest extent possible, aerosol transmission? How many hotels or facilities are being used in this country that have inadequate ventilation as we have seen at the Mercure Hotel in WA?

Prof. Kelly: I would have to take that on notice. As I said, these are matters for the state and territory governments. They manage hotel quarantine. It is up to them to apply locally the recommendations from the statement I read from December last year.

Senator SIEWERT: Is the Commonwealth taking no overview or audit of these facilities? Are you just leaving it up to the states and territories?

Answer:

The Commonwealth does not routinely monitor ventilation at individual hotels and facilities as quarantine arrangements are a matter for state and territory governments. States and territories are required to comply with the expert medical advice of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC), and its expert subcommittees. The Infection Control Expert Group (ICEG) recommends applying a hierarchy of controls to quarantine arrangements, with consideration of airflow and ventilation.

The Commonwealth maintains a register of audits and reviews conducted into managed quarantine and has regular discussions at AHPPC as part of its continuous improvement framework.