

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

Written Questions on Notice, 2 July 2021

PDR Number: IQ21-000138

The responsibility for monitoring the implementation of quarantine in Australia

Written

Senator: Kristina Keneally

Question:

Please see below questions for the Department. If this exact information isn't available, please provide as much information as possible in relation to this question.

1. Since 20 March 2020, which Commonwealth agency or agencies has been overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of quarantine in Australia?

Answer:

- On 27 March 2020, National Cabinet agreed that states and territories are responsible for the management of quarantine under their own public health legislation, given their primary responsibility in delivering health care.
- The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC), having considered the National Review of Hotel Quarantine, has endorsed national principles for hotel quarantine (published 24 December 2020). These remain flexible to allow hotel quarantine programs to be tailored to local requirements.
- In line with COVID-19 public health best practice, all states and territories consider quarantine operations in line with the advice of the AHPPC.
- National Cabinet has also endorsed the Continuous Improvement Framework (published 14 April 2021) which was developed by AHPPC considering best practice approaches for end-to-end quarantine arrangements.
- The Commonwealth has entered into a publicly available bilateral agreement to prioritise the repatriation and quarantine of stranded Australians at the Centre for National Resilience at Howard Springs. As required in the bilateral agreement, the Commonwealth clinical lead undertakes infection prevention and control audits every three months to ensure national standards are maintained and makes recommendations for improvement.

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Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

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

Written Question on Notice, 2 July 2021

PDR Number: IQ21-000139

Availability of places in mandatory government controlled designated quarantine facilities, each month

Written

Senator: Kristina Keneally

Question:

Please see below questions for the Department. If this exact information isn't available, please provide as much information as possible in relation to this question.

2. Since 20 March 2020, is this Department aware of how many mandatory government controlled designated quarantine facilities* places have been available each month? If yes, please provide this data broken down by state and territory on a monthly basis.

*Commonly referred to as "hotel quarantine" but also including non-hotel facilities like Howard Springs, NT

Answer:

- As agreed by National Cabinet, from 28 March 2020 all international arrivals have been required to undertake 14 days of quarantine in a designated facility. Further, the National Cabinet agreed that states and territories are responsible for the management of quarantine under their own public health legislation.
- The Department of Health does not have records of the number of places available in state and territory operated hotel quarantine facilities.
- In partnership with the Northern Territory Government, the Australian Government established the Centre for National Resilience as Australia's strategic national quarantine centre to prioritise the repatriation of stranded Australians who are registered with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as wanting to return.
- The Centre's capacity has been increased several times to safely support:
 - 500 returning Australians per fortnight, October 2020 to December 2020.
 - 850 returning Australians per fortnight, December 2020 to May 2021.
 - 2,000 returning Australians per fortnight, May 2021 onwards.