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Honourable Jennifer Coate AO
Board of Inquiry into the Covid19 Hotel Quarantine Program
By email only – contact@quarantineinquiry.vic.gov.au

27 September 2020

Re- Request for the Inquiry to investigate the role of the Victorian Trade Hall Council and related officers in the Covid19 Hotel Quarantine Program

Dear Ms Coate

We request that your inquiry into the Covid19 Hotel Quarantine Program undertake detailed investigations into the role of the Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC) and related officers in the decision by the Victorian government to engage the private security industry to guard returning international travellers in the Hotel quarantine program.

We make this request given that in responses to detailed questions put to the Premier, Ministers and senior responsible public servants, every reply by each person has been that they do not know how the decision was made or who made the decision to engage private security guards.

In the light of these universal 'know nothing' responses, at this stage it would appear to be a mystery as to how and by whom such a critical decision was made. Yet the fact is that someone must have made the decision and there must have been a process by which such a decision was made.

We hold the view and submit to you that the decision to use private security firms was likely made external to Victorian government processes, namely by persons in and around the VTHC and that the Victorian government acceded to that decision.

We further submit that there has been evidence given to your Inquiry that the VTHC were involved in the decision to engage private security industry and therefore pointing to our view as having some measure of justification and that that evidence of itself warrants deeper and detailed investigation.

In making this request we submit that a wide number of VTHC officers and related officials need to be interviewed. We submit that investigations need to occur into the personal, contractual and money flow relationships between unions and security firms, relationships between union officials, government ministers, senior bureaucrats and the decision-making influence of union officials over the Victorian government at multiple levels in relation to the decision to use private security firms.

We submit that officials, officers and members of the following unions need to be called to provide evidence – Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union, Electrical Trades Union, Australian Manufacturing Workers Union and Public Service Union.

We submit that without the further inquiries as requested the Inquiry is unlikely to uncover the truth behind the decision to engage private security guards in the hotel quarantine program, why there was a failure to adequately control, supervise and support the operations of the private security firms and their staff and consequently why the quarantine program failed resulting in the Covid19 breakout across Victoria and some 765 deaths to date.

With thanks for your considerations

Sincerely

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