



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Mr Alistair Coe MLA (Chair), Ms Tara Cheyne MLA (Deputy Chair), Mrs Vicki Dunne MLA,
Mr Michael Pettersson MLA, Ms Caroline Le Couteur MLA

ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE DURING PUBLIC HEARINGS

Asked by MICHAEL PETERSSON MLA on 14 May 2020: REBECCA CROSS took on notice the following question(s):

Ref: Hansard Transcript 14 May 2020, PAGE P204

In relation to:

MR PETERSSON: I want to clarify something you mentioned at the very beginning. You mentioned that your role was unique across Australia. Is that correct? Ms Cross: I said I am not aware of anything that is exactly the same as mine. I think each state and territory has put in place their own arrangements. I am not aware of any that is exactly the same as mine.

MR PETERSSON: Could you articulate what some of the differences between the roles of these people might be?

Ms Cross: I am talking to the Northern Territory, and I think they may have given powers to the head of their service and the head of their police force. I think they may have handled it in that way. In Victoria—again, I have not spoken to them—I understand they may have set up a committee of all their secretaries that is looking at the future directions in Victoria in response to COVID-19. We did a phone around early on to see if there were any roles the same as mine and did not find any, but I think each state and territory has put in place the mechanisms that work best for them. I can find out more for you if you are interested.

MR PETERSSON: That would be interesting.

REBECCA CROSS: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

The ACT's Coordinator-General role has been established with the following agreed roles and responsibilities:

- work closely with the Chief Health Officer (CHO) to ensure the health and non-health responses are well aligned;
- maintain sound governance, decision-making and other processes, that are well coordinated and working efficiently;
- regularly review, with DG JACS and GSO, structures and legal authority as the COVID-19 response evolves, and consult with the Attorney-General on advice if changes are required;
- work with Treasury to monitor the implementation of economic support packages; and

- support a more strategic approach on longer term issues, not just the immediate crisis – for example through supporting the work on community resilience during the crisis, and community recovery at the other end.

The Coordinator-General role is oriented toward the ACT’s non-health response, ACT public service business continuity and recovery efforts i.e. across the spectrum of COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.

The following information outlines key COVID-19 response mechanisms and roles in other Australian jurisdictions, none of which represent an exact equivalent role to that of the ACT Coordinator-General role.

Victoria

The State Control Centre (SCC) has been activated to oversee and coordinate Victoria’s COVID-19 response under leadership of the State Response Controller. Victoria has also established a Crisis Council of Cabinet.

In addition, eight new core missions (health emergency; economic emergency; economic program delivery, supply, logistics and procurement; continuity of essential services — people; continuity of essential services — economic; economic recovery (private sector); restoration of public services — people; and restoration of public services — economic (public sector)) and two programs of work (Behavioural change, social cohesion and communications and Critical risks and opportunities) that aim to ensure critical services can continue throughout the COVID-19 crisis have been established.

Each mission is led by a department secretary, and the leaders meet collectively as the Missions Coordination Committee. A Mission Coordination Unit has been established in the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) to underpin the entire work program led by an Executive Director within DPC.

New South Wales

The NSW Government has established the State Emergency Operations Centre (**SEOC**), comprising experts from more than 20 critical agencies such as Police, Education and Transport. SEOC is led by the State Emergency Operations Controller, the Deputy Police Commissioner.

The main roles of the SEOC during an emergency operation are:

- To control the emergency operation
- To plan for the ongoing emergency operation
- To plan, acquire and allocate resources
- To provide public information about the emergency operation

In addition, the NSW government has stood up specific sector taskforces to coordinate sector specific responses such as the Transport for NSW COVID-19 Taskforce.

Queensland

In early February, QLD developed a Queensland Disaster Management Committee of Cabinet (QDMCC) to oversee COVID-19 health and non-health responses. From an operations perspective Qld chose to activate their well galvanised disaster management structure. This means a State Disaster Coordinator and a Deputy Queensland Police Commissioner have been appointed to oversee the operational aspects of QLD's COVID-19 response such as the implementation of restrictions and border control measures. The State Disaster Coordinator works in very close partnership with the Chief Health Officer.

Western Australia

The State Emergency Co-ordinator is a role undertaken by the WA Commissioner for Police. The State Emergency Co-ordinator undertakes the following functions:

- Undertake the coordination of the State's response to an emergency;
- Provide advice to the Minister and State Disaster Council; and
- Provide advice and assistance to hazard management agencies and carry out emergency management activities as directed by the Minister.

In terms of recovery:

- The WA Premier appointed the WA Public Sector Commissioner to the role of State Recovery Controller to coordinate the whole of government recovery effort, which includes effective coordination of industry and community input.
- The State Recovery Controller role is not established in legislation, but rather in policies and plans in the State Emergency Management Framework which is made under the *Emergency Management Act 2005*.
- The approach to COVID-19 pandemic recovery in Western Australia will engage the whole of the public sector (rather than a stand-alone agency), coordinated across a small number of recovery areas.

South Australia

The State Coordinator enacts Directions under State emergency provisions which apply to everyone living in, and entering, South Australia.

As outlined in the *South Australian Emergency Management Act 2004*, SA Health is the Hazard Leader for human disease and control agency for human epidemics, food and waterborne diseases.

A multi-agency Command Centre was also launched within SA Health headquarters as part of a whole-of-government response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Command Centre allows agencies to work together to enable a comprehensive state-wide response and includes representatives from key State Government agencies.

Northern Territory

Under the NT's Territory Emergency Management Council structure, a Territory Operations Centre (TOC) was activated to support the Department of Health to

develop strategies for the continuing management of COVID-19 in the Northern Territory.

The TOC has since transitioned to the Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) and is tasked with overseeing and coordinating the Northern Territory's response to COVID-19. The Commissioner and CEO of Police, Fire and Emergency Services is the Territory Controller.

On 13 May 2020 the NT Chief Minister announced the establishment of the Territory Economic Reconstruction Commission; the membership and terms of reference for this group are expected to be announced shortly.

Tasmania

The Director of Public Health has declared a Public Health Emergency for Tasmania to help manage the threat of COVID-19. This declaration provides the Director with emergency powers to implement public health measures to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in Tasmania.

Tasmania has appointed a State Controller under the *Emergency Management Act 2006*. The Tasmanian Police Commissioner is fulfilling the State Controller role.

A State Recovery Adviser position is also established under the same Act, which is being undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet's Policy and Intergovernmental Relations Deputy Secretary.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on the COVID-19 pandemic response

Signature:



Date: 22 May 2020

By the Coordinator-General, Rebecca Cross