



AIDE MEMOIRE

Review of ventilation systems at Grand Mercure Auckland

Date:	22 April 2021	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:		Tracking number:	2021-3380

Information for Minister(s)

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Shayne Gray	General Manager, Service Quality and Assurance, MBIE	Privacy of natural persons	✓
Privacy of natural persons	Senior Policy Advisor		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted

Ministry of Health

Minister's office to complete:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved | <input type="checkbox"/> Declined |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noted | <input type="checkbox"/> Needs change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seen | <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by Events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's Notes | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn |

Comments



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Purpose

The purpose of this aide memoire is to provide you with the results of the Technical Advisory Group review of the on-site ventilation assessment into the Grand Mercure Auckland managed isolation facility (MIF). This aide memoire also outlines the next steps that will be undertaken following this review.

Shayne Gray
General Manager, Service Quality and Assurance
MBIE

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Background

1. Following the case of transmission at the Pullman MIF, and concerns with the ventilation systems at the Pullman, a desktop review was undertaken of all managed isolation and quarantine facilities. These reviews identified a number of areas of interest and a programme of detailed on-site assessments were commenced including at the Grand Mercure Auckland [refer MBIE briefing 2021-2564].
2. Subsequent to the commencement of on-site ventilation assessments, two genomically linked cases of COVID-19 were detected at the Grand Mercure Auckland MIF on 19 and 21 March [refer Health report 20210903].
3. A verbal overview of the findings of the on-site assessment of the Grand Mercure Auckland MIF ventilation systems was considered by the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on 19 April 2021.
4. The Grand Mercure Auckland has 207 rooms that are available for travellers.

Findings of the on-site ventilation review of the Grand Mercure Auckland

5. Physical on-site testing has now been completed and the ventilation assessment has identified two main areas of concern that are relevant to the hotel operating as a MIF:
 - there is a lack of ventilation of fresh air into the hallway areas

- the transmission of COVID-19 that happened, took place between rooms that were on different floors (but above one another). The unlikely, but most plausible cause of transmission was aerosol transmission through ventilation between the floors possibly from behind the panelling in the rooms but the exact cause is not confirmed.
6. It is important to note that the facility was designed to be operated as a hotel not a MIF. The ventilation issues that have been identified are only relevant when considering that the facility is used as a MIF. The ventilation system in the facility would not be considered to be inadequate if the facility was only used as a hotel.

Consideration of the findings by the Technical Advisory Group

7. The TAG considered the findings of the on-site assessment of the ventilation systems at the Grand Mercure Auckland at its meeting on 19 April 2021.
8. The TAG noted that there were concerns with the ventilation system at the Grand Mercure Auckland MIF. Despite the two areas of concern they considered the risk of COVID-19 aerosol transmission as **low**.
9. In the TAG meeting it was noted that decisions made about the future use of Grand Mercure Auckland as a MIF would in effect establish a benchmark for other facilities. It is likely that other MIQ facilities will have similar issues to that revealed with the Grand Mercure ventilation system.
10. The Grand Mercure Auckland MIF is currently occupied with travellers until 27 April 2021. TAG advised that the most appropriate course of action is to keep the Grand Mercure occupied with the current occupants until the completion of their two week isolation period on 27 April.
11. The TAG advised that the Grand Mercure Auckland MIF not be reoccupied after 27 April until an agreed remediation plan is developed with AccorHotels, who lease the Grande Mercure.

Discussion with AccorHotels

12. MIQ officials have provided the ventilation review to AccorHotels. Preliminary discussions were held with them on 20 April 2021. AccorHotels have now undertaken to analyse the report and come up with a plan to address the issues identified. In developing this plan AccorHotels will need to discuss the ventilation review and remediation options with their landlord and key stakeholders.

Next steps

13. AccorHotels have undertaken to provide a preliminary response to the ventilation issues, and any other areas of concern raised by 23 April 2021. This will include the development of remediation options to address these issues. We will then analyse the suitability of any options outlined by AccorHotels.
14. As part of this consideration of options we will also engage with AccorHotel about their future intentions with the hotel and in particular their willingness to remain a MIF or to return to being a normal hotel that services the tourism trade now that quarantine free travel has been established with Australia.
15. Following these discussions we will report back to you by 7 May 2021 on the options that exist regarding the future use of the Grand Mercure Auckland as a MIF. This consideration of options for the Grand Mercure Auckland will need to take place within the context of broader analysis of the relative suitability of different MIF facilities and reporting on the options for the wider MIQ network.

16. On-site ventilation reviews are also continuing in all other MIQ facilities. The plan provides for the on-site component of the reviews by the end April unless there are issues in obtaining access to some areas due to rooms being occupied in some MIQ facilities, or there is a need for further follow up on-site assessments.
17. Once the on-site assessments are completed an analysis of the findings will then be undertaken. We will report to you on the progress of these reviews and the findings on a fortnightly basis.