

12 June 2020

Ms Jennifer Hoy  
Senior Solicitor Assisting  
Special Commission of Inquiry into the Ruby Princess

By email: [jennifer.hoy@rubyprincessinquiry.nsw.gov.au](mailto:jennifer.hoy@rubyprincessinquiry.nsw.gov.au)

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**Subject: Special Commission of Inquiry into the Ruby Princess – Qantas Response**

Dear Ms Hoy

I refer to your correspondence of 3 June 2020 sent on behalf of Special Commissioner Bret Walker SC (**Special Commissioner**) in relation to the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Ruby Princess (**Inquiry**) (**Letter**), and in particular to the requests for information contained in the Letter.

Qantas Airways Limited (**Qantas**) is pleased to be able to assist the Special Commissioner in relation to the Inquiry, and has, using the numbering set out in the Letter, provided responses below to each of the queries raised in the Letter.

1. ***Was Qantas aware (and if so when did it become aware) that passengers disembarking from the Ruby Princess on 19 March 2020 would be (or were) passengers travelling on Qantas flights?***

On Saturday, 21 March 2020, Qantas became aware that passengers which disembarked from the Ruby Princess on 19 March 2020 (**Ruby Princess Passengers**) may be travelling on Qantas flights, with crew advising that passengers with Ruby Princess merchandise (e.g. bag tags) were onboard a Qantas flight.

2. ***If yes, please advise what Qantas Flights were caught by Ruby Princess passengers that disembarked on 19 March 2020.***

Qantas does not have a list of flights on which Ruby Princess Passengers travelled as it has no definitive systemic method of confirming whether passengers identified on the Ruby Princess manifest subsequently provided by NSW Health (**Manifest**) are the same persons as those who travelled on Qantas flights with the same name.

Qantas has however, following receipt of the Manifest, retrospectively reviewed a number of flights which were operated between 19 March 2020 and 2 April 2020, and can provide



an estimate of the number of Ruby Princess Passengers that may have travelled on specified Qantas flights during that period.

3. ***Was Qantas given any information or advice from the Commonwealth or NSW government agency concerning passengers disembarking the Ruby Princess on 19 March 2020, or did any such agency communicate with Qantas in any way concerning those passengers?***

Qantas was not given any information or advice from the Commonwealth or any NSW government agency concerning Ruby Princess Passengers on 19 March 2020.

Qantas (through its Medical department) contacted the Australian Department of Health on 21 March 2020. Following that, communications ensued between Qantas and each of the:

- Australian Government Department of Health;
- NSW Government Department of Health;
- Australian Federal Police; and
- Office of the Minister for Home Affairs,

up until 31 March 2020.

4. ***If yes to 3, please provide details of the information or advice provided, and the nature of the communication.***

The communications were largely directed towards understanding the framework surrounding air travel for Ruby Princess Passengers, including the ability of such passengers to travel and the capacity to identify and prevent such passengers from travelling.

5. ***Does Qantas have any information relevant to the transmission (or suspected transmission) of COVID-19 from Ruby Princess passengers to Qantas crew or other passengers?***

Qantas is not aware of any confirmed transmission of COVID-19 from Ruby Princess Passengers to Qantas crew or other passengers.

Qantas crew who worked on two flights (specified below), that may have carried Ruby Princess Passengers, have tested positive for COVID-19. However, Qantas has not determined the timing of when these crew acquired COVID-19 (i.e. pre-flight or post flight) or the source of the virus (passengers or otherwise). Further, it is not clear whether such crew interacted with any Ruby Princess Passengers, and Qantas is not aware if any Ruby Princess Passengers on these flights tested positive to COVID-19. Accordingly, it is more likely that these infections are coincidental rather than causative.

Date	Port of Departure and Arrival (Flight Number)	Estimated Number of Ruby Princess Passengers	Qantas Crew Subsequently Tested COVID-19 Positive
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20 March 2020	Sydney-Dallas Fort Worth (QF7)	3	1
22 March 2020	Sydney-Dallas Fort Worth (QF7)	3	4

**6. Does Qantas have any information relevant to the transmission (or suspected transmission) of COVID-19 from Qantas crew or passengers to others?**

Qantas is not aware of any confirmed transmission of COVID-19 from Qantas crew or passengers to others whilst onboard Qantas aircraft. This issue is currently the subject of a collaborative research project between industry and the Australian Government Department of Health.

Qantas is aware of Qantas crew that have travelled together to international ports that have subsequently tested positive for COVID-19. The precise timing and definitive sources for these crew acquiring the virus are unknown, however Qantas expects that it is most likely to have occurred in a public social setting whilst in an international port, prior to the enforcement of self-isolation and quarantining requirements in international jurisdictions.

Should the Special Commissioner have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely



Andrew Finch  
General Counsel & Group Executive  
Office of the CEO  
Qantas Airways Limited





12 August 2020

Ms Jennifer Hoy  
Senior Solicitor Assisting  
Special Commission of Inquiry into the Ruby Princess

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**CONFIDENTIAL**

**Subject: Special Commission of Inquiry into the Ruby Princess – Qantas Supplementary Response**

Dear Ms Hoy

I refer to Qantas Airways Limited's (**Qantas**) letter to the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Ruby Princess (**Inquiry**) dated 12 June 2020 (**Qantas Response**), in which Qantas provided responses to a number of requests for information from Special Commissioner Bret Walker SC (**Special Commissioner**) contained your correspondence of 3 June 2020 (**Special Commission's Letter**).

Qantas has recently received confirmation of additional information relevant to one of the requests contained in the Special Commission's Letter. Qantas' supplementary response on this matter is set below.

**1. Does Qantas have any information relevant to the transmission (or suspected transmission) of COVID-19 from Ruby Princess passengers to Qantas crew or other passengers?**

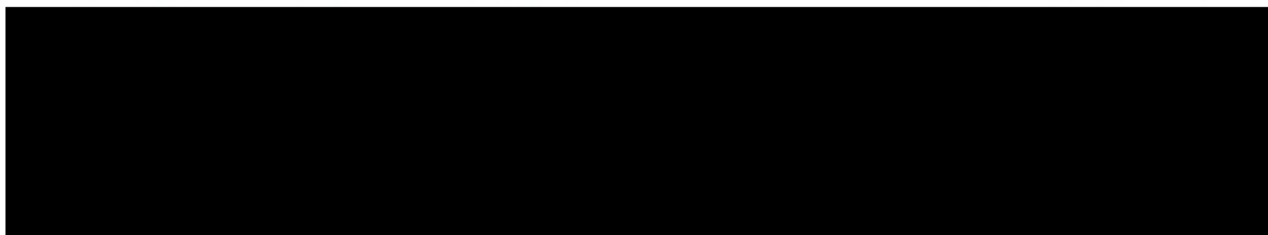
Qantas has been verbally advised by the Department of Health, Western Australia (**WA Health**), that they are conducting research into inflight COVID-19 transmission and are analysing a Qantas A330 flight from Sydney to Perth on 19 March 2020 carrying Ruby Princess passengers (**Flight**).

WA Health have advised Qantas that they intend to publish their research findings in a medical journal once finalised. Qantas has not been provided with a copy of the WA Health research, and understands that it has not yet been peer reviewed.

It is estimated that the Flight had approximately twenty eight (28) passengers from the Ruby Princess and (30) passengers from the Ovation of the Seas, along with a number of passengers from the Sun Princess. Qantas can confirm that no cabin crew on the Flight tested positive for COVID-19 after the Flight.



Qantas had not received any information or advice from the Commonwealth or any NSW government agency concerning Ruby Princess passengers on 19 March 2020 (including the Ruby Princess manifest), and as such was not aware that Ruby Princess passengers had boarded this Flight.



Should the Special Commissioner have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely

A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to be 'Ben Jones', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ben Jones  
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+61 [redacted]

