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Re-evaluating cleaning

Greg Campbell explains how cleaning venues faces a new array of challenges

While our doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers have been justifiably lauded for the magnificent work they have performed to manage the Coronavirus pandemic across Australia, behind the scenes an army of dedicated cleaners have been busily disinfecting and decontaminating a range of sites to ensure their continued safe operation.

In the front line of the battle Quayclean Australia, a specialised organisation which supplies cleaning services to aquatic and recreation facilities; entertainment and sport venues; high traffic public sites; over 50 major private schools including many with boarding house facilities; and key institutions such as the Parliament of Victoria.

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training and procedures, safety of its team of cleaners, through to the range of decontamination and disinfection products being used at sites.

Quayclean Australia Chief Executive, Mark Piwkowski, said his team is well equipped to manage the safe and complete cleaning of customer sites, adding the company is vastly experienced in dealing with highly contagious viruses such as COVID-19.

Piwkowski said Quayclean has drawn on its experiences from the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games to assist customers and protect the public during the COVID-19 pandemic - Quayclean having been responsible for cleaning and presentation services for 11 event venues at the Gold Coast Games when there were a number of Norovirus (gastro) outbreaks among athletes and officials.

Piwkowski explained "once we were notified of the gastro outbreak at Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, we took immediate steps to safeguard athletes and officials, and we managed to contain any further spread of the virus.

"The knowledge we gained, and the systems we implemented in 2018, has allowed us to respond quickly and safely during this current pandemic."

Piwkowski said Quayclean has successfully completed disinfection cleans for suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19 at venues, educational facilities, commercial



operators and healthcare sites across Australia.

Advising that cleaning staff are using cleaning agents approved by Australian Health Authority (AHA) and World Health Organization (WHO) that disinfects and kills bacteria, Piwkowski noted "work has been completed at private schools, aquatic facilities and public venues on the same day of the suspected infection.

"The purpose of the cleaning and disinfection process is to remove viral contamination from all surfaces to eliminate the transmission of the virus from these surfaces to other staff.

"We continue to take a proactive approach reviewing advice and recommendations provided by WHO, the Australian Government, and Australian and state Chief Medical Officers to ensure the best results for our customers and our staff."

Quayclean was quick to supply its state offices and major contract locations with a specifically designed COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Response Kit which includes disposable overalls, face masks, gloves and goggles.

These PPE kits enabled Quayclean staff to have the flexibility and speed to attend sites and complete a thorough decontamination cleaning.

Piwkowski stated "the kits are designed to protect our team in case of suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19 and only used by teams trained to focus on suspected or actual outbreaks."

Staff workplace safety has been a key focus for Quayclean, Piwkowski explained, commenting "exposure to COVID-19 is a potential hazard for workers, and we have put measures in place to ensure their protection.

"Staff are advised to wash their hands prior to commencing work and immediately pull on their gloves.

"Work trolleys are wiped at the beginning and end of every shift, mops and vacuums are sanitised at the end of each shift, and staff are advised to work a minimum of 1.5 metres from each other," he added.



Advising that Quayclean staff are dedicating cleaning work towards 'touch point' cleaning where COVID-19 can potentially exist, Piwkowski added "our staff are currently directing their energies towards extra emphasis on sanitising and disinfecting areas such as wiping door plates, handles, waste bins and taps to support necessary preventative maintenance cleaning measures."

Quayclean has increased cleaning support for many clients particularly educational, leisure, healthcare and commercial accounts.

Piwkowski notes that "customers have requested additional labour to ensure that rotational touch-point sanitising is maintained at a higher level. We are working with clients to identify all areas that have the highest possibility of becoming infected.

"While the additional rotational touch-point cleaning will assist sanitisation, there is no better solution than ensuring for personnel hygiene, self-isolating if you are unwell, and

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following the guidelines provided by the AHA and WHO.”

Piwkowski also sees that communication with clients and staff is critical during the current climate, going on to say “we have been speaking with customers and providing regular newsletters regarding the latest information available to us and advising about the cleaning measures we are undertaking to protect their communities.

“Our leaders and supervisors have been conducting ‘tool box’ meetings with our staff on safe operating procedures. The team has been awesome and have responded as expected and I can’t speak more highly about their attitude and desire to serve.”

With Quayclean workers having been acknowledged by customers during a very difficult time for the country and for business operators, Piwkowski noted “we have received fantastic feedback from our customers who have expressed their gratitude with the meticulous work our staff are undertaking to ensure their sites are safe. At such a critical time for the health of the nation, this positive feedback has been very welcomed and warmly received.”

Piwkowski sees that the pandemic represents an opportunity for the whole cleaning industry to step up to the challenge,

demonstrate its capability during a significant time of need, and alter negative pre-conceived perceptions, stating “cleaning is an essential front-line service, particularly during COVID-19. But too often our work goes unrecognised and is too often under-appreciated because our work is mostly carried out after hours and out of public view.

“In fact, we had one client recently comment that our staff were not visible doing what we do such as repetitive touch cleaning. This is because we have always operated quietly and unobtrusively in the background to allow business to operate as normal.

“We have responded to this comment by asking our staff to wear high visible vests so that our team are clearly identifiable so we can illustrate the work we are doing to keep them free from any infection.”

Quayclean has also been trialling a new fogging gun at outdoor facilities where the machine blasts a mixture of disinfectant and water into very fine droplets to decontaminate surfaces.

Additionally, Quayclean is considering using drones which can conduct large scale external mass disinfection of public areas.

Piwkowski concluded “we have always embraced the potential to use new technologies to make cleaning more effective and more efficient.

“And at times where social isolation is so important in the containment of COVID-19, the potential use of new technology is not only smart, but is also safe.”

Greg Campbell is Managing Director of PRISM Strategic Communications.

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