

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Monday, 27 April 2020

MAJOR CORONAVIRUS TESTING BLITZ TARGETS 100,000

Up to 100,000 Victorians will be tested for coronavirus over the next two weeks as part of a major testing blitz across the State, to better understand how the virus is spreading in the community and set us up for the potential easing of restrictions.

Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos today announced the massive expansion of testing, which will help inform decisions about slowly lifting restrictions, ahead of the State of Emergency being reviewed on 11 May.

The testing blitz will be carried out through a combination of drive-through and walk-up clinics, as well as new mobile screening clinics to visit homes and workplaces.

There are already 43 specialist sites across Victoria where testing can be undertaken, with more testing clinics to be opened during the week, including in the Gippsland and Northern Loddon areas, to allow for more testing in regional and rural areas.

Victorians have done a remarkable job in sticking to the coronavirus restrictions, and by staying home we have saved lives. We are now asking Victorians to again play their part by getting tested because the more testing we do, the more data we have about the prevalence of coronavirus in our community.

Common symptoms of coronavirus are fever, breathing difficulties, breathlessness, cough, sore throat, fatigue or tiredness. Anyone who has any symptoms, no matter how mild, such as a runny nose or scratchy throat, is encouraged to get a test.

Certain industries that are still operating at full capacity will be targeted for testing, including healthcare and aged care workers, construction workers, supermarket workers and agricultural workers. Major employers and unions will be supported to actively promote testing to all staff and nurses will provide outreach support and advice around symptoms and help staff to access testing.

In addition, workers without symptoms in hospitals and other facilities with vulnerable residents will also be asked to voluntarily participate in sample testing as part of new research in line with the pre-requisites set out by the National Cabinet.

The widespread testing of individuals will be used alongside wastewater testing, where the levels of coronavirus in sewage will be tracked to help anticipate or rapidly respond to local outbreaks.

Ramping up coronavirus testing is in-line with the pre-requisites set out by the National Cabinet for a potential easing of restrictions.

More than 104,000 Victorians have been tested to date. Any decision to ease restrictions after the current State of Emergency will be informed by public health experts and modelling, combined with international experience.

Quotes attributable to Premier of Victoria Daniel Andrews

"We've asked a lot of Victorians, but the plan we put in place to slow the spread of this virus is working. And if we keep working together and keep doing the right thing, we will get to the other side of this crisis."

"By increasing the testing for coronavirus and widening the testing criteria, it gives us more evidence and therefore more options when it comes to slowly lifting restrictions."

For information on coronavirus please visit www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au or phone 1800 675 398

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos

“Victorians have done an amazing job sticking to restrictions to help us to save lives and now we need your help again. The more people we test – the better we can track the spread of this virus and decide what our next steps are.”

Quote attributable to Victoria’s Chief Health Officer Professor Brett Sutton

“Any decision to ease restrictions needs to be backed and informed by evidence and that’s exactly what these tests help to provide.”