

# Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP  
Premier



Tuesday, 18 August 2020

## VICTORIANS REMINDED TO KEEP GETTING TESTED

Victorians are urged not to become complacent even after successive days of lower case numbers. Since the start of the pandemic nearly two million tests have been processed, with daily numbers reaching as high as 34,000 on some days.

But while it is encouraging that daily case numbers are beginning to stabilise, we have also seen a concerning drop off in testing rates in recent days. The seven days from 11 to 17 August saw 154,432 tests processed, a drop of almost 30,000 or around 17 per cent from the previous seven-day period.

The reduction could be explained by stronger restrictions on movement, and the trend is broadly consistent across the state – however there are more extreme examples of testing falling away. Our large scale testing sites have seen between 15 and 40 per cent drops in demand in recent weeks, even though our testing capacity has increased.

While it is good news that people are staying home and following the restrictions, you are allowed to leave your home to get tested. Even if you're not going to work, even if you live by yourself or with only one other person – you should still get tested if you have any symptoms at all of coronavirus.

We've said all along that we will be guided by what the data tells us, so the more tests we can do to understand how this virus is spreading in the community, the better. Without consistently strong testing numbers, low case numbers alone won't give us confidence we need to begin easing restrictions.

With flu cases down 75 per cent on the same time last year, it's far more likely that a sniffle, or scratchy throat, could be coronavirus. The most effective way to beat this deadly virus – which has already claimed 351 lives this year – is to find every new case and isolate them as quickly as possible to stop further spread amongst the community.

Victorians have worked incredibly hard to follow the rules and drive community transmission numbers down – we can't let all that effort go to waste by letting our guard down now.

Our \$450 coronavirus test isolation payment means you don't have to choose between putting food on the table and taking care of your health – while also protecting the wider community.

Getting tested is easier than ever before with more than 190 locations across Victoria offering free coronavirus testing – whether it's in a health service, GP clinic, drive-through or pop-up site.

We're also making it easier to access testing in regional areas with dedicated Incident Management Teams (IMT) set up in Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong to offer more testing, as well as food and financial support, to those affected by the virus.

### Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

*"The greatest weapon we have in the fight against this pandemic is to keep testing. We can't stop this virus if we don't know it's there – which is why we need to all play a part in fighting this thing, by getting tested."*

*"My message to Victorians could not be clearer – if you have any symptoms at all, go and get tested. We simply can't afford to be complacent when it comes to this deadly virus."*