

Questions without Notice

Nam: The Hon Meg Webb MLC

Questions:

- 1 Confirm mandatory reporting to public health of positive rapid antigen tests (RATs) and PCR tests remains in place?
- 2 Detail how and when that ongoing mandatory reporting of positive COVID tests requirement has been communicated to the public and medical professionals, in the lead up to and since the announced 14th of October lifting of mandatory isolation requirements?; and
- 3 Detail how the government intends to “*closely monitor the COVID-19 situation moving forward and continue to take public health advice as we manage COVID-19*” as undertaken by the Premier in his media release dated the 30th of September this year?

Answered by: The Hon Leonie Hiscutt MLC
Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Answers:

- 1 COVID-19 remains a notifiable disease under the *Public Health Act 1997 (Tas)*.

Public Health continues to provide recommendations about the management of COVID-19 to guide risk management for individuals, workplaces, and the community, with a focus on protecting people at greatest risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19.

The requirement for laboratories to notify Public Health of the results of polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests remains, and was not affected by changes to isolation requirements.

The management of COVID-19 is now increasingly being managed in a sustainable and proportionate manner, consistent with public health principles and our approach to other notifiable respiratory infections.
- 2 Public Health encourages Tasmanians to continue to report positive RAT results. Impending changes to COVID-19 management requirements were communicated nationally following the decisions of National Cabinet on 30 September 2022.

In Tasmania, a media release was issued outlining changes to isolation requirements and Public Health consulted with key stakeholders including representatives from higher risk settings such as health, aged care, disability care and the education sectors.

Public Health subsequently provided advice to the public with recommendations for COVID management at www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au, and via radio, print and social media.

Medical practitioners were provided with specific updates through Primary Care.

3 Surveillance of COVID-19 involves numerous measures of disease activity, control, and preventive activities.

Some of these include positive PCR results, the proportion of PCR tests that are positive and PCR testing numbers and rates; positive RAT results and estimates of RAT testing; demographic characteristics of cases; outcome data including hospitalisation, ICU admissions and deaths; outbreaks and outbreak case numbers and characteristics in various settings; vaccination rates; use of antiviral therapies, particularly in aged care; genetic typing of viral strains; and surveillance for influenza-like illness.

Public Health has substantial and long-standing expertise in communicable disease surveillance. They have worked closely with jurisdictional and national colleagues to establish, maintain, and improve COVID-19 surveillance locally and nationally.

The risk from COVID-19 in Tasmania continues to be closely monitored, and advice is provided and updated in accordance with the current epidemiological circumstances.



Jeremy Rockliff MP
Premier
Minister for Health

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