

Yvette D'Ath

From: John Wakefield **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 9 December 2021 7:59 PM
To: Yvette D'Ath; Luke Richmond; Kyle Fogarty
Subject: Fwd: For URGENT action | Ceasing of MBS item 69501 for private sector pathology and impacts 4x dedicated freight COVID-19 testing locations (private pathology operated)

Minister. Further to our conversation, pls see attached email thread. You will see TMR advise of a commonwealth release about ceasing the MBS rebate for freight.

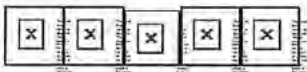
I will see the email from James on the other issue of reduced Medicare rebate for private path covid tests.

Regards. J

Dr John Wakefield PSM
Director-General
Queensland Health

Phone: **Irrelevant**
Address: 1 William Street, Brisbane 4000
Email: **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au

Queensland Health
Office of the Director-General



www.health.qld.gov.au

Queensland's Health Vision: By 2026 Queenslanders will be among the healthiest people in the world.

Queensland Health acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land, and pays respect to Elders past, present and future.

Begin forwarded message:

From: James K Smith **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Date: 9 December 2021 at 6:22:37 pm AEST
To: "COVID-19.IMT" **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>, Lynne McKinlay **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>, Peter Aitken **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>, John Wakefield **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Cc: "COVID-19.IMT" **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Subject: Re: For URGENT action | Ceasing of MBS item 69501 for private sector pathology and impacts 4x dedicated freight COVID-19 testing locations (private pathology operated)

Hi Deb

Brett's proposal looks very reasonable to me, too.

However, while this seems appropriate I think there will need to be a little more higher level discussion to ensure the relevant parties at DG level within QH, TMR and Treasury agree with this.

I have copied in CHO and DG.

James

Get Outlook for iOS

From: COVID-19.IMT **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, December 9, 2021 6:02 pm
To: James K Smith
Cc: COVID-19.IMT
Subject: FW: For URGENT action | Ceasing of MBS item 69501 for private sector pathology and impacts 4x dedicated freight COVID-19 testing locations (private pathology operated)

Hi James, I believe you may be more across this than me but the suggestions below seem reasonable. However as this crosses jurisdictions is there any move to seek an extension of the unique Medicare item (69501) past end Jan 2022?

Regards, Deb

From: Brett Bricknell **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 9 December 2021 4:20 PM
To: COVID-19.IMT **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>; Lynne McKinlay **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Cc: Matt Ford **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>
Subject: FW: For URGENT action | Ceasing of MBS item 69501 for private sector pathology and impacts 4x dedicated freight COVID-19 testing locations (private pathology operated)
Importance: High

PHIC

Hi team

Are you happy for me to advise the following in response to this issue

1. TMR to enter into a funding agreement with these providers instead for this testing, with funding to be covered under the NPA (TMR to pay and claim back from Treasury like Health)
2. Need to establish a price but one option is simply to pay them the equivalent price new Medicare rebate price of \$93.80
3. As the lead agency they should continue to manage directly rather than Health

We are of course happy to help them engage

Thanks
Brett

From: Tina L Highet **Irrelevant** @tmr.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 9 December 2021 3:54 PM

To: Brett Bricknell **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Cc: Matt Ford **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; Simon Hicks **Irrelevant** @tmr.qld.gov.au>;
Sarah L Kasteel **Irrelevant** @tmr.qld.gov.au>; SHECC TMR-LO_FREIGHT **Irrelevant**
Irrelevant @tmr.qld.gov.au>; Response.Lead.Engagement
Irrelevant @health.qld.gov.au>; Aimee Du Toit
Irrelevant @health.qld.gov.au>

Subject: For URGENT action | Ceasing of MBS item 69501 for private sector pathology and impacts
4x dedicated freight COVID-19 testing locations (private pathology operated)

Importance: High

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Hi Brett

Hope this find you well. Please see email below.

As discussed with Matt, please can you kindly seek urgent advice from QLD Health - COVID Incident Management Team about what funding arrangements will be in place when MBS item 69501 ceases on 1 January 2022.

Cwlth release

To assist states and territories with interstate rail crew and transport worker border crossings, the Australian Government created a unique Medicare item (69501), available to rail crew workers or heavy vehicle drivers who are required to travel interstate for work. MBS item 69501 is available for COVID-19 tests performed by private sector pathology providers who are approached directly by an interstate transport worker for a test. MBS item 69501 will cease on 1 January 2022.

As you are aware TMR has established 4x freight dedicated testing facilities, operated by 4Cyte and QML. This Medicare cessation will call into question the viability of these facilities to continue if there is no funding in place.

For greater context whilst the QLD Freight Protocol is being amended next week to align with acceptable risk levels associated easing of border restrictions, the 7 day rolling surveillance testing will remain for freight. To date, no discussions have been held regarding the CHO's posturing for QLD asymptomatic testing of freight and logistics operators post 1 January 2022.

Also, 5x NSW freight-friendly testing sites are also closing on the 15th Dec. and the remaining will close for a Christmas period, increasing pressure on the QLD system.

I will need to convene a meeting to discuss as soon as feasible.

Please can you kindly keep us advised of your discussions with QLD Health and A/ CHO Dr Peter Aitken (I believe Dr Aitken is resuming DDG duties) as this is an issue that is escalated to Minister Bailey and TMR DG-Scales.

Available to discuss.

Cheers, Tina

Tina Highet

A/Director | Heavy Vehicle Operations
Land Transport Safety and Regulation Branch | Customer Services, Safety and Regulation Division |
Department of Transport and Main Roads

M: Irrelevant
Irrelevant@tmr.qld.gov.au@tmr.qld.gov.au

Unite against COVID-19

From: Tina L Highet
Sent: Wednesday, 8 December 2021 2:59 PM
To: Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au
Subject: Ceasing of MBS item 69501 for private sector pathology

Hi Matt

Please see attached advice from Cwlth as regards the following:

To assist states and territories with interstate rail crew and transport worker border crossings, the Australian Government created a unique Medicare item (69501), available to rail crew workers or heavy vehicle drivers who are required to travel interstate for work. MBS item 69501 is available for COVID-19 tests performed by private sector pathology providers who are approached directly by an interstate transport worker for a test. MBS item 69501 will cease on 1 January 2022.

The cost associated with interstate transport worker COVID-19 testing provided by state and territory governments continues to be covered under the National Partnership on COVID-19 Response (Partnership). The Australian Government provides financial support to all state and territory governments for COVID-19 testing through the Partnership, funding 50 per cent of the costs of public health testing facilities. Under the Partnership, all governments have committed to providing COVID-19 pathology testing to people in Australia free of-charge, including freight and transport workers.

Through the Partnership, the Australian Government has provided over \$7.0 billion in funding to support state and territory health systems respond to COVID-19 outbreaks as of 7 November 2021. In particular, the Partnership has provided \$270.0 million in the 2020-21 and 2021-22 financial years in direct funding to COVID-19 PCR testing delivered in state and territory clinics. Partnership funding is demand driven with no cap on funding.

This mechanism for the Australian Government to support ready access to testing for COVID-19 has been in place since the start of the pandemic and has worked well to support testing as a critical component of our successful response. A fundamental principle remains, and should continue, no costs should be imposed on those requiring a test, including necessary testing associated with border crossings.

Where COVID-19 testing is medically necessary and has been requested by a doctor, it is appropriately funded by the Australian Government through the MBS.

Where COVID-19 testing is undertaken for public health purposes, for example asymptomatic testing for travel, workplace testing, or testing of casual or close contacts, it is appropriately funded through the Partnership.

Based

What does this mean for providers?

The introduction of this new item affords private sector pathology providers the ability to provide microbio for SARS-CoV-2 to:

- asymptomatic workers of residential and in-home aged care service providers in Victoria; and
- asymptomatic freight workers who are required to travel interstate as a driver of a heavy vehicle or crew.

This item is not to be claimed with other pathology items. A patient episode initiation (PEI) rebate or bulk incentive (BBI) will not be applicable with MBS item 69501. However, an MBS fee has been applied to the item 69501 so that it is equivalent to the total MBS rebate paid for MBS item 69480 when claimed with the PEI and BBI for a private sector collection centre sample (MBS item 73928 and MBS item 74995). A PEI has not been applied to MBS item 69501 as the Government may assist with collecting samples, which would not be eligible for PEI or BBI.

Testing services under the new item can only be provided by private sector pathology providers, must be performed on-site and are not available to hospital in-patients.

The item requires reporting of test results to all appropriate authorities in accordance with the relevant state or territory legislation or regulations and patients, within 24 hours of receipt of the specimen.

Testing for asymptomatic workers who are required to travel interstate as a driver of a heavy vehicle can only be performed nationally.

Testing for asymptomatic workers of residential and in-home aged care service providers is only available for those who are employed, hired, retained or contracted by an aged care service provider in Victoria.

Tina Highet

A/Director | Heavy Vehicle Operations

Land Transport Safety and Regulation Branch | Customer Services, Safety and Regulation Division |

Department of Transport and Main Roads

M: Irrelevant

Irrelevant @tmr.qld.gov.au@tmr.qld.gov.au

Unite against COVID-19 

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RTI Released

Yvette D'Ath

From: SDLO **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 27 December 2021 9:55 AM
To: Yvette D'Ath
Subject: FW: URGENT - HIB - COVID-19 testing capacity
Attachments: HIB_COVID-19 testing capacity_20211227.docx; HIB_COVID-19 testing capacity_20211227 (002).pdf

From: **Irrelevant**
Sent: Monday, 27 December 2021 9:51 AM
To: Amy Louise Melville **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; CLLO **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; Daniel Goodman **Irrelevant**@ministerial.qld.gov.au>; Darren Brown **Irrelevant**@ministerial.qld.gov.au>; Darren Cann **Irrelevant**@ministerial.qld.gov.au>; David Harmer **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; Dawn Schofield **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; DL-ELT_Personal **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; Estimates **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; Genevieve Siddle **Irrelevant**@ministerial.qld.gov.au>; James K Smith **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; Joanne Kalaja **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; Kirsten Ram **Irrelevant**@ministerial.qld.gov.au>; Kyle Fogarty **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; Luan Sadikaj **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; Lucy Collier **Irrelevant**@ministerial.qld.gov.au>; Luke Richmond **Irrelevant**@ministerial.qld.gov.au>; Lynne McKinlay **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; Martin Philip **Irrelevant**@ministerial.qld.gov.au>; MinDLO **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; Miranda Thompson **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; news **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; Olivia McLean **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; Peter Aitken **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; Rachel Hoffman **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; Rachel Vowles **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; Renaie Tesch **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; Response Lead - Policy **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; Response.Lead **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; SHECC **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; Simon Zanatta **Irrelevant**@ministerial.qld.gov.au>; Tracey Lenz **Irrelevant**@ministerial.qld.gov.au>; Trish Nielsen **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>
Cc: Kirsten MacGregor **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; Jess Hogan **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>
Subject: URGENT - HIB - COVID-19 testing capacity

Good morning,
Please find attached advance copy of the HIB requested. This will be updated for tomorrow.

Kind regards,
Miranda



Miranda Claughton
A/Director
Ministerial & Executive Services Unit, Office of the
Director-General & System Strategy
Division | Queensland Health

P **Irrelevant**
E **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au
W health.qld.gov.au
A [1 William Street](#)



Queensland Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land across Queensland, and pays respect to First Nations Elders past, present and future.

From: Kat Acampora **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 27 December 2021 7:15 AM
To: SDLO **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>; Dawn Schofield **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>; Kyle Fogarty **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>; CHO COVID **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Cc: Kirsten MacGregor **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>; Jess Hogan **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>; news **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au>
Subject: URGENT - HIB - testing capacity

Hey all,

Apologies for the urgent email.

The Ministers office has requested an urgent HIB on testing capacity - they want it ASAP. See below message.

"Can I get a clear hib on what/how many testing clinics are open today? How many people Working at them? Premier is up at 10am. Telecon at 9"

Cheers,
Kat

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Hot Issues Brief

COVID-19 Testing Clinics

27 December 2021

Issue:

- As at Monday 27 December 2021 (public holiday), Queensland has 123 of its 130 testing locations operating, noting that a number of these are by appointment only.
- There are over 230 private pathology testing locations in Queensland, however, most of these sites have been closed from 25 to 27 December 2021.
- Queensland Health staff are continuing to work over the Christmas and New Year period to ensure that testing sites are up and running, with minimal disruptions to locations and hours of service. The total number of staff working across these sites is not available.
- Between public and private laboratories, Queensland can process around 60,000 COVID-19 PCR tests per day.

Background:

- Media agencies are reporting that there are delays for the public to receive a COVID-19 PCR test and the associated results over the holiday period.
- On 27 December 2021, the Courier-Mail published the article 'COVID Qld: Families in limbo as test result waiting times blow out'.
- In response to increases in cases since the opening of the border on the 13 December, the requirement for a GP referral to private pathology was waived on 17 December 2021.
- The following factors increases demand for PCR testing in Queensland:
 - Increasing cases in the community and subsequent increase in close contacts.
 - Increasing public exposure sites, including high-traffic locations such as shopping centres and restaurants, pubs and clubs in the lead up to Christmas.
 - Day 5 testing requirements for arrivals from interstate hotspots.
 - Pre-departure testing requirements for Queenslanders travelling to other jurisdictions that consider Queensland a hotspot.
- The following factors decreases demand for PCR testing in Queensland:
 - The shorter 7-day quarantine period for vaccinated close contacts. People need 2 tests when in 7-day quarantine compared to 3 tests for 14 days quarantine.
 - Removal of pre and post arrival testing requirements for interstate travel.
- A table showing the current status of PCR testing across all Queensland Hospital and Health Service catchments for 27 December 2021 is at appendix 1.

Actions to date:

- A number of Hospital and Health Services have identified an ability to increase their number of testing locations as surge capacity over the Christmas period, ability to extend hours and through put, and ability to mobilise 24 hours capacity. This was in addition to the number of routine clinics already established.
- The most recent status of these measures as of 27 December 2021 are:
 - Cairns HHS - Concierge triage in place outside clinics to help prioritise testing for vulnerable cohorts. Additional staff added and working on increasing opening hours into the evening
 - Gold Coast HHS – Looking to increase staff today to meet demand
 - Metro South HHS:
 - have opened up a drive through at Logan West, for at least a few days to mitigate the reduced hours of private pathology
 - not extending formal opening hours but have extended staffing for several hours after formal closing time to meet the existing line (at closing time)
 - Metro North HHS - while opening hours remain the same (cannot extended beyond 0800-2100), have prioritised additional staffing to be put on the RBWH
 - Sunshine Coast HHS – main concern is Noosa currently. Further update pending.
 - COVAX

Prepared by: Miranda Thompson
Position: A/Director, MESU
Telephone: Irrelevant
Date: 29 December 2021

Approved by: Dawn Schofield
Position: Executive Director,
ODG&SSD
Telephone: Irrelevant
Date: 29 December 2021

DLT Member / HSCE: Dawn Schofield
Position: Executive Director, ODG&SSD
Telephone: Irrelevant
Date: 29 December 2021



- UQ clinic has seen large numbers
- RNA showground is scheduled to open tomorrow (28/12)

Media response:

- A media holding statement has been prepared and a copy submitted with this HIB
- A media holding statement is not required

Confidential Information

- Turnaround times of private laboratories is commercial-in-confidence and not reported to Queensland Health, but is typically within 24 hours noting that this may increase to 48 hours during peak periods.

Contact person:

Dr Peter Aiken, Deputy Chief Health Officer on **Irrelevant**

Appendix 1 – COVID-19 PCR testing clinic summary for 27 December 2021

Hospital and Health Service Catchment	QH span of hours for testing	Private provider span of hours
Cairns and Hinterland HHS	7:30 – 20:00	All closed
Central Queensland HHS	6:30 – 14:00	All closed
Central West HHS	By appointment	All closed
Children's Health Queensland HHS	8:00-16:00	N/A
Darling Downs HHS	8:00 – 15:00	4Cyte at Goondiwindi for Heavy Vehicles
Gold Coast HHS	9:00 – 16:30	All open
Mackay HHS	8:30 – 16:00 & integrated with Emergency Departments	All closed
Metro North HHS	8:00 – 21:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QML – Ashgrove – 8:00 – 12:00 • SNP – all open – 6:30 – 12:00 • 4Cyte – all open (except Narangba) – span 7:00 – 16:30
Metro South HHS	8:00 – 16:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QML – all open (except Rocklea and Victoria Point) – span 7:00 – 18:00 • SNP – Beenleigh – 9:00 – 12:00 • 4Cyte – drive-throughs at Carina, Eight Mile Plains, Highgate Hill – span 8:00 – 16:00
North West HHS	On-call or by appointment and (Mt Isa clinic 24 hours)	All closed
South West HHS	By appointment	N/A
Sunshine Coast HHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nambour General Hospital – 8:00 – 16:00 • Gympie Hospital – closed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QML – All open – 7:00 – 12:00 • SNP – Nambour drive through – 9:00 – 15:00 • 4Cyte – all open – span 7:00-15:30
Torres and Cape HHS	Bamaga 24 hours	N/A
Townsville HHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1300 SMILES – 8:00 – 18:00 • Ayr Health Service – 24 hours • Magnetic Island – closed 	All closed
West Moreton HHS	Closed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QML – Raceview pop-up – 8:00 – 14:00 • SNP – Ipswich drive through – 9:00 – 12:00 • 4Cyte – 6:30 – 16:00
Wide Bay HHS	Closed	All closed

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Position: A/Director, MESU
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ODG&SSD
Telephone: Irrelevant
Date: 29 December 2021

DLT Member / HSCE: Dawn Schofield
Position: Executive Director, ODG&SSD
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Queensland
Government

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Contact person:

Dr Peter Aiken, Deputy Chief Health Officer on **Irrelevant**

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Wide Bay HHS	Closed	All closed

Yvette D'Ath

From: Shane Doherty
Sent: Monday, 3 January 2022 4:58 PM
To: Martin Philip
Cc: Yvette D'Ath; Kerryn Manifold; Dr Michael Riordan; Tracey Lenz
Subject: Re: Urgent approval: Testing clinic wait times and availability - media lines

Ok

Sent from my iPhone

On 3 Jan 2022, at 3:58 pm, Martin Philip <Martin.Philip@ministerial.qld.gov.au> wrote:

FYI

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: news Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>
Date: 3 January 2022 at 3:37:39 pm AEST
To: Martin Philip Irrelevant@ministerial.qld.gov.au, Lucy Collier Irrelevant@ministerial.qld.gov.au
Cc: Sarah ORourke Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au, Ben Armstrong Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au, news Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Urgent approval: Testing clinic wait times and availability - media lines

Good afternoon Marty and Lucy,

FYI – Please see below for our response for current and future enquires about PCR testing and increasing lengths of COVID testing lines.

This will be distributed as soon as possible but Ben will call to discuss.

Thanks,
Alani

Please attribute to a spokesperson for Queensland Health / HHS:

We thank Queenslanders for their patience and continuing willingness to come out and get tested.

PCR testing demand escalated quickly in Queensland in December 2021, and continues to place pressure on hospital and health services and private pathology providers, particularly over the Christmas/New Year period, *where many private testing clinics have*

been closed and pressure on the remaining public and private providers has been greater.

Removing the day 5 PCR testing requirement for those entering Queensland, changes to the definitions of close and casual contacts, and expanded use of Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) will all assist to ease the testing burden over coming days and weeks. *Most private pathology providers will return to normal operating hours on Tuesday 4 January 2022, following the Christmas/New Year period.*

People with symptoms of COVID -19

Only those with symptoms of COVID-19 need to get a PCR test.

If you've taken a RAT and receive a positive result, you should assume you have COVID-19 and should immediately isolate at home with all household members. *You may have reduced waiting time for a confirmatory PCR test if you delay this until the 4th January.*

Contacts of known cases who do not have confirmed COVID -19 and who are in quarantine awaiting day 6 testing to be released.

If you have access to a RAT test at home and it is negative on day 6, you do not need to get a PCR test and can leave quarantine after 7 days since your contact, assuming you are symptom free.

If you do not have access to RAT test, we recommend you defer your day 6 PCR test until the 4th January when greater testing clinics will mean wait times are much less.

Starting from 5th January, RAT tests will be increasingly available to be handed out to eligible close contacts attending state health clinics requiring day 6 testing prior to release from quarantine. These test kits will be provided free to eligible close contacts.

Background – not for attribution:

Recent decisions of National Cabinet included the strong advice that PCR testing should be reserved for people with symptoms of COVID-19, and that a RAT is acceptable for quarantine exit for asymptomatic people.

Wait times for many testing clinics across Queensland tend to be shorter in the afternoon.

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RTI Released

Yvette D'Ath

From: Martin Philip
Sent: Thursday, 30 December 2021 1:13 PM
To: Yvette D'Ath; Shane Doherty; Kerry Manifold; Dr Michael Riordan
Subject: Fwd: Media Enquiry: 4Cyte pathology warning

Getting some info from the Dept on these claims and have told the journo interstate testing issues have been repeatedly addressed at pressers this week, but would the response, if any, be:

- Qld laid out a clear road map, including testing requirements for interstate arrivals, and following this road map has kept Queenslanders safe
- Qld testing requirements have now changed
- interstate testing turnaround times are the result of policy settings in those jurisdictions, and their higher case loads

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Baz Ruddick **Irrelevant** @abc.net.au>
Date: 30 December 2021 at 12:56:49 pm AEST
To: Martin Philip **Irrelevant** @ministerial.qld.gov.au>
Subject: Media Enquiry: 4Cyte pathology warning

Hi Martin,

Thanks again for the chat.

I wasn't aware when we spoke but the story had already been written.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-12-30/4cyte-pathology-says-it-sounded-alarm-about-covid-19-testing/100731128>

We would like response from the Health Minister if possible.

Deadline would be 5pm today (30/12)

- **Had the Government been contacted by 4Cyte pathology and warned that requirements for travel (negative PCR tests) would cause problems for pathology companies?**
- **Was this information considered by the Minister for Health when the decision was made that a negative PCR test would be required?**
- **Did this warning have any bearing on the Government's decision to change testing requirement to rapid antigen rather than PCR?**

Much appreciated.

Baz

Baz Ruddick
Video Journalist

M Irrelevant
E Irrelevant @abc.net.au
T @BazRuddick

RTI Release

Yvette D'Ath

From: Martin Philip
Sent: Monday, 3 January 2022 3:58 PM
To: Yvette D'Ath; Shane Doherty; Kerry Manifold; Dr Michael Riordan; Tracey Lenz
Subject: Fwd: Urgent approval: Testing clinic wait times and availability - media lines

FYI

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: news<[redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>
Date: 3 January 2022 at 3:37:39 pm AEST
To: Martin Philip [redacted]@ministerial.qld.gov.au>, Lucy Collier [redacted]@ministerial.qld.gov.au>
Cc: Sarah ORourke [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>, Ben Armstrong [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>, news [redacted]@health.qld.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Urgent approval: Testing clinic wait times and availability - media lines

Good afternoon Marty and Lucy,

FYI – Please see below for our response for current and future enquires about PCR testing and increasing lengths of COVID testing lines.

This will be distributed as soon as possible but Ben will call to discuss.

Thanks,
Alani

Please attribute to a spokesperson for Queensland Health / HHS:

We thank Queenslanders for their patience and continuing willingness to come out and get tested.

PCR testing demand escalated quickly in Queensland in December 2021, and continues to place pressure on hospital and health services and private pathology providers, particularly over the Christmas/New Year period, *where many private testing clinics have been closed and pressure on the remaining public and private providers has been greater.*

Removing the day 5 PCR testing requirement for those entering Queensland, changes to the definitions of close and casual contacts, and expanded use of Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) will all assist to ease the testing burden over coming days and weeks. *Most private pathology providers will return to normal operating hours on Tuesday 4 January 2022, following the Christmas/New Year period.*

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Yvette D'Ath

From: John Wakefield **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 4 January 2022 4:59 PM
To: Dawn Schofield; Dr Michael Riordan; Yvette D'Ath
Cc: Keith McNeil; Brett Bricknell
Subject: Private Pathology Meeting Outcomes

Hi Minister

The meeting with the privates was useful.

On the call were QML, 4Cyte, ACL, Clinical Labs, SNP, Mater, and Genomics4Life.

The key issues impacting them are:

1. Shift from batch testing (10 samples at once) to single testing, reduces their throughput capacity by around 50% - we are collating their new max capacity
2. Reagents - some of the providers indicated that they had supply chain issues with reagents which is compounded by the move to single tests.
3. Staffing - the impact of the holidays, plus the impact of staff who are positive or a close contact for COVID has had and continues to have a significant impact on their capacity
4. Specific policy issues impacting demand
 - SNP indicated significant resources (almost all their capacity of 8-9k per day) going to the Cwth resi aged care, with PCR testing of mostly staff including follow up surveillance of contacts.
 - All indicated significant demand due to pre-admission screening in private sector with private specialists and hospitals requiring PCR test within 72 hours of elective admission.
 - Confirmatory tests from positive RAT tests. All indicated that there are significant demand for this, and it is a TGA requirement in the instructions that tells people to present for PCR to confirm positive test.
5. Things that may assist them to expand capacity
 - changes to furloughing rules to reduce impact of quarantine for contacts
 - better support for drive in clinics. They are facing significant local resident complaints about these clinics, and the queues create some civil disturbance at times. QPS can sometimes be helpful and sometimes closes them down. Perhaps some support for queue management - they fund themselves.
 - change to the requirements for pre-hospital screening and also for the surveillance and contact follow up in resi care sector
6. Have they been approached by Cwth to hand out free RAT in their queues?
They have not been approached. They would consider if we provided to them but would need details and would not want the queue management and handout to take their technical experts away from testing. Note there is no Cwth payment for people who they turn away from PCR line.

ACTIONS:

All providers will provide updated locations and opening hours to cover tomorrow and next few days, to SHECC by 1700 hours today.

John

Dr John Wakefield PSM
Director-General

Queensland Health

Phone: Irrelevant

Address: 1 William Street, Brisbane 4000

Email: Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au

Queensland Health

Office of the Director-General



www.health.qld.gov.au



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Yvette D'Ath

From: Yvette D'Ath
Sent: Wednesday, 5 January 2022 8:32 AM
To: External - Mark Cridland
Subject: FW: Private Pathology Meeting Outcomes

From: John Wakefield **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 4 January 2022 4:59 PM
To: Dawn Schofield **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>; Dr Michael Riordan **Irrelevant** @ministerial.qld.gov.au>; Yvette D'Ath **Irrelevant** @ministerial.qld.gov.au>
Cc: Keith McNeil **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>; Brett Bricknell **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
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ACTIONS:

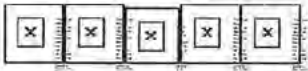
All providers will provide updated locations and opening hours to cover tomorrow and next few days, to SHECC by 1700 hours today.

John

Dr John Wakefield PSM
Director-General
Queensland Health

Phone: Irrelevant
Address: 1 William Street, Brisbane 4000
Email: Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au

Queensland Health
Office of the Director-General



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Yvette D'Ath

From: Yvette D'Ath
Sent: Wednesday, 5 January 2022 9:15 AM
To: Kerryn Manifold; Shane Doherty
Subject: FW: Fever Clinic update for 04/01/2022 at 16:30

From: John Wakefield **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 5 January 2022 8:20 AM
To: Yvette D'Ath **Irrelevant** @ministerial.qld.gov.au>
Subject: Fwd: Fever Clinic update for 04/01/2022 at 16:30

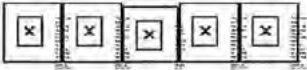
Sorry Minister. I sent to Michael but not you.

Here it is.

Dr John Wakefield PSM
Director-General
Queensland Health

Phone: **Irrelevant**
Address: 1 William Street, Brisbane 4000
Email: john.wakefield@health.qld.gov.au

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Begin forwarded message:

From: John Wakefield **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Date: 4 January 2022 at 9:39:23 pm AEST
To: Dawn Schofield **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>, Dr Michael Riordan **Irrelevant** @ministerial.qld.gov.au>, John Gerrard **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>, Kirsten MacGregor **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Subject: Fwd: Fever Clinic update for 04/01/2022 at 16:30

Hi Michael et al

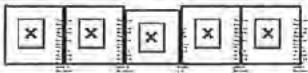
Further to the meeting today with the privates, pls find the updates clinics for tomorrow.

Regards, J

Dr John Wakefield PSM
Director-General
Queensland Health

Phone: Irrelevant
Address: 1 William Street, Brisbane 4000
Email: Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au

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Begin forwarded message:

From: SHECC Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>
Date: 4 January 2022 at 8:16:37 pm AEST
To: John Wakefield Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>
Cc: John Gerrard Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>, Peter Aitken Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>, Dawn Schofield Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>, James K Smith Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>, Lynne McKinlay Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>, Keith McNeil Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>, Jane Hancock Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>, Kirsten MacGregor Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>, "Response.Lead.Reporting" Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>, "SHECC.XO" Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>, "Response.Lead" Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>, Brett Bricknell Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Fever Clinic update for 04/01/2022 at 16:30

Hi John

Please find below the details of the changes to private pathology sites
- 6 drive through sites opening for tomorrow (WED)

	Provider	Address
QML - Ashgrove Baptist Church Car Park	4060 QML Pathology	7 Firhill St, (enti

QML - Boondall - Brisbane Entertainment Centre	4034	QML Pathology	Car Park 2: ENT
QML - Edens Landing	4207	QML Pathology	125-127 Castile
QML Cleveland	4163	QML Pathology	39-55 Delancey
QML - Indooroopilly	4068	QML Pathology	111 Ward Street
Medlab - Wilston	4051	Medlab Pathology	280 Newmarket
Medlab - Bundle	4217	Medlab Pathology	88 Bundall Rd

QML indicate that these x2 remaining Drive through sites will reopen on 10 Jan

QML Loganholme	4129	QML Pathology	The Church of J Redland Bay Rd
QML PATHOLOGY - Raceview		QML Pathology	65 Briggs Road

Regards
Tony
SHECC

From: John Wakefield Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au
Sent: Tuesday, 4 January 2022 7:54 PM
To: SHECC Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au
Cc: John Gerrard <Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>; Peter Aitken <Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>; Dawn Schofield <Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>; James K Smith <Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>; Lynne McKinlay <Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>; Keith McNeil <Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>; Jane Hancock <Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>; Kirsten MacGregor <Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>; Response.Lead.Reporting <Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>; SHECC.XO <Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>; Response.Lead <Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>; Brett Bricknell <Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Fever Clinic update for 04/01/2022 at 16:30

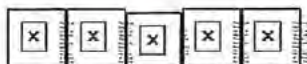
Thanks Tony. I need more specificity pls. Which drive in sites reopened? What date? What hours?

Thank you

Dr John Wakefield PSM
Director-General
Queensland Health

Phone: [Irrelevant](tel:Irrelevant)
Address: 1 William Street, Brisbane 4000
Email: Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au

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Office of the Director-General



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On 4 Jan 2022, at 7:50 pm, SHECC Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au wrote:

Good evening,

SHECC has received responses from below

- QML – Some drive through sites have reopened. Only 2 remain closed (Raceview – open 7 Jan; Loganholme – open 10 Jan)
- SNP – nil change
- 4cyte – Nil change
- ACL/Medlab – x2 reopened sites – Wilston and Bundall – 8:00 to 11:00

Website changes have been made and will be published shortly.

Nil response from

- Clinical labs
- Genomics4life

Regards
Tony
SHECC

**State Health Emergency
Coordination Centre**
SHECC

Interim Public Health and COVID Response
Division | Queensland Health

P Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au
E Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au
W health.qld.gov.au
A 33 Charlotte Street, Brisbane QLD 4000

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From: John Wakefield **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 4 January 2022 7:32 PM
To: SHECC **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Cc: John Gerrard **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>; Peter Aitken **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>; Dawn Schofield **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>; James K Smith **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>; Lynne McKinlay **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>; Keith McNeil **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>; Jane Hancock **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>; Kirsten MacGregor **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>; Response.Lead.Reporting **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>; SHECC.XO **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>; Response.Lead **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>; Brett Bricknell **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Fever Clinic update for 04/01/2022 at 16:30

Hi Yen

I met with the Private Path providers this afternoon and asked them all to communicate their locations and opening hours to SHECC by 5pm.

Could I please have a short summary of the private path responses including a nil response, for the following providers.

QML
S and N
4cyte
ACL
Clinical Labs
Genomics4Life

I am particularly focussed on what testing clinics will be open tomorrow and what hours, and any forward plans for next few days.

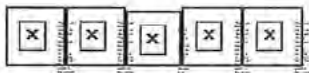
Pls let me know when you can get this to me. I need to brief the Govt tonight.

Thank you. John

Dr John Wakefield PSM
Director-General
Queensland Health

Phone: Irrelevant
Address: 1 William Street, Brisbane 4000
Email: Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au

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Office of the Director-General



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On 4 Jan 2022, at 6:08 pm, SHECC
Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au> wrote:

Good afternoon

Please see the 16:30 data summarised below.

1. All HHSs as at 16:30 04/01/2022 – total reported tests 12,123:

HHS	Number of open locations	Tests conducted 16:30hrs	Average Wait Time in Minutes (as HHS maximum)
Cairns and Hinterland	7	1,255	240
Central Queensland	17	831	120
Central West	15	29	5
Children's Health Queensland	2	392	0
Darling Downs	23	1,350	300
Gold Coast	2	622	120
Mackay	9	559	240

Mater Health Services	2	568	120
Metro North	6	912	90
Metro South	6	2,468	
North West	6	301	45
South West	15	211	0
Sunshine Coast	3	905	300
Torres and Cape	3	141	0
Townsville	13	639	240
West Moreton	1	200	180
Wide Bay	3	740	0
Total	133	12,123	

Kind regards

Yen

**State Health Emergency
Coordination Centre**
SHECC
Interim Public Health and Covid Response
Division | Queensland Health

P **Irrelevant**
E **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au
W health.qld.gov.au
A 33 Charlotte Street, Brisbane, QLD 4000

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RTI Release

Yvette D'Ath

From: Martin Philip
Sent: Wednesday, 5 January 2022 10:47 AM
To: Yvette D'Ath
Subject: FW: Private Pathology Testing Locations - open today.



Martin Philip
Senior Media Advisor
Office of the Hon. Yvette D'Ath MP
Minister for Health and Ambulance Services
Leader of the House
P **Irrelevant** | Mob **Irrelevant** | Email: **Irrelevant**@ministerial.qld.gov.au
1 William Street Brisbane

From: Kyle Fogarty **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 5 January 2022 10:37 AM
To: Martin Philip **Irrelevant** @ministerial.qld.gov.au>
Cc: Dawn Schofield **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Private Pathology Testing Locations - open today.

Hi Marty

Please see below updated table - Medlabs sites in Wilston and Bundle will be operating tomorrow, and the QML locations listed below will be open tomorrow and Friday. All will operate the same opening hours.

Let me know if you need anything further.

Thanks
Kyle

	Provider	Address	Drive Through	Ope
QML - Ashgrove Baptist Church Car Park	4060 QML Pathology	7 Firhill St, (entry via Bailey's Rd preferable) Ashgrove, 4060	Yes	070

QML - Boondall - Brisbane Entertainment Centre	4034	QML Pathology	Car Park 2: ENTRYGATE A Bicentennial Road, Boondall, 4034	Yes	08:00
QML - Edens Landing	4207	QML Pathology	125-127 Castile Crescent, Edens Landing, 4207	Yes	08:00
QML Cleveland	4163	QML Pathology	39-55 Delancey St, Cleveland, 4163	Yes	07:00
QML - Indooroopilly	4068	QML Pathology	111 Ward Street, Indooroopilly, 4068	Yes	07:00
Medlab - Wilston	4051	Medlab Pathology	280 Newmarket Rd	Yes	08:00
Medlab - Bundle	4217	Medlab Pathology	88 Bundall Rd	No	08:00

Kyle Fogarty
Director
Office of the Director-General
Queensland Health
Irrelevant

From: Martin Philip **Irrelevant**@ministerial.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, January 5, 2022 10:19 am
To: Kyle Fogarty
Cc: Dawn Schofield
Subject: RE: Private Pathology Testing Locations - open today.

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Thanks Kyle, much appreciated – would also be good if possible to get the planned opening hours for tomorrow in time for presser.

Cheers



Martin Philip

Senior Media Advisor

Office of the Hon. Yvette D'Ath MP

Minister for Health and Ambulance Services

Leader of the House

P (Irrelevant) | Mob (Irrelevant) | Email: (Irrelevant)@ministerial.qld.gov.au
1 William Street Brisbane

From: Kyle Fogarty (Irrelevant)@health.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 5 January 2022 10:10 AM
To: Martin Philip (Irrelevant)@ministerial.qld.gov.au>
Cc: Dawn Schofield (Irrelevant)@health.qld.gov.au>
Subject: Private Pathology Testing Locations - open today.

Hi Marty

As discussed, please see below testing location and opening hours that the private pathology providers advised last night.

I've asked SHECC to phone and confirm whether these opening have changed as a result of long ques, or whether the sites didn't open as planned. I'll confirm with you if there are any changes.

Thanks
Kyle

	Provider	Address	Drive Through	Open
QML - Ashgrove Baptist Church Car Park	4060 QML Pathology	7 Firhill St, (entry via Bailey's Rd preferable) Ashgrove, 4060	Yes	07:00
QML - Boondall - Brisbane Entertainment Centre	4034 QML Pathology	Car Park 2: ENTRYGATE A Bicentennial Road, Boondall, 4034	Yes	08:00
QML - Edens Landing	4207 QML Pathology	125-127 Castile Crescent, Edens Landing, 4207	Yes	08:00
QML Cleveland	4163 QML Pathology	39-55 Delancey St, Cleveland, 4163	Yes	07:00
QML - Indooroopilly	4068 QML Pathology	111 Ward Street, Indooroopilly, 4068	Yes	07:00
Medlab - Wilston	4051 Medlab Pathology	280 Newmarket Rd	Yes	08:00
Medlab - Bundle	4217 Medlab Pathology	88 Bundall Rd	No	08:00

Kyle Fogarty

Director
Office of the Director-General
Queensland Health
Irrelevant

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Yvette D'Ath

From: Dawn Schofield **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 5 January 2022 9:11 PM
To: Yvette D'Ath; Tracey Lenz; Dr Michael Riordan; Kirsten Ram
Cc: John Wakefield; John Gerrard; Kyle Fogarty; Kirsten MacGregor
Subject: Fwd: Public Holiday testing numbers
Attachments: 20220105_Public Holiday testing numbers.docx; 20220105_Public Holiday testing numbers.pdf

Hi all,

The Treasurer's office requested the attached data re testing sites over the Christmas period.

As always, they are limitations with the data but essentially shows:

- Increasing presentation to QH testing clinics
- That PQ is was producing more daily test results over Xmas than before Xmas
- The privates are at or less than pre-Xmas levels.

Turn around time has blown out as more tests waiting to be processed

Thanks
Dawn

Dawn Schofield
Executive Director
Office of the Director-General
Queensland Health
Irrelevant @health.qld.gov.au
Irrelevant

From: Response.Lead.Reporting **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, January 5, 2022 9:39 am
To: Dawn Schofield
Cc: Rachel Vowles; Daniel Williamson; Kyle Fogarty
Subject: RE: Public Holiday testing numbers

Good morning
Please find the populated report attached as requested
Kind regards
Leane



Leane Christie
COVID Project Manager
Response Lead Reporting, Interim COVID-19
Response Division | Queensland Health

E **Irrelevant**@health.qld.gov.au
W health.qld.gov.au
A 11, 33 Charlotte St, Brisbane, 4000



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From: Dawn Schofield [Irrelevant]@health.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 4 January 2022 7:11 PM
To: Response.Lead.Reporting [Irrelevant]@health.qld.gov.au>
Cc: Rachel Vowles [Irrelevant]@health.qld.gov.au>; Daniel Williamson [Irrelevant]@health.qld.gov.au>
Subject: Public Holiday testing numbers

Hi Team,

Please can populate the attached and provide to me tomorrow morning, but say 10am.

I'm so sorry, I know you're swamped. You are awesome!

Thanks
Dawn

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COVID-19 Public Holiday Testing stats (Statewide)

05 January 2022

Data is based on day testing/processing occurred (reported publicly on the following day).

Date	Presentations to public fever clinics (approx) <small>(note private clinics do not report presentations to QH)</small>	Samples processed by Pathology Queensland	Samples processed by Private sector (including interstate samples)	Average Turn Around Time (TAT) <small>(note this is PQ TAT only as private clinics do not report)</small>
23 December 2021	6,330	10,449	20,235	36.1
24 December 2021	9,056	10,639	23,332	36.5
25 December 2021	5,743	10,253	19,665	46.2
26 December 2021	10,304	9,217	15,298	44.6
27 December 2021	14,810	11,410	20,597	49.6
28 December 2021	15,476	13,980	21,042	50.4
29 December 2021	14,086	14,919	20,260	54.9
30 December 2021	12,108	14,944	20,272	58.5
31 December 2021	11,269	16,136	22,602	70.6
1 January 2022	8,881	12,736	21,254	77.4
2 January 2022	13,067	13,331	17,475	86.6
3 January 2022	15,362	13,625	19,687	98.8
4 January 2022	TBC	13,162	16,254*	115.7

*Estimated 24-hour volume.

COVID-19 Public Holiday Testing stats (Statewide)

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*Estimated 24-hour volume.

Luke Richmond

From: John Wakefield **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 9 December 2021 7:59 PM
To: Yvette D'Ath; Luke Richmond; Kyle Fogarty
Subject: Fwd: For URGENT action | Ceasing of MBS item 69501 for private sector pathology and impacts 4x dedicated freight COVID-19 testing locations (private pathology operated)

Minister. Further to our conversation, pls see attached email thread. You will see TMR advise of a commonwealth release about ceasing the MBS rebate for freight.

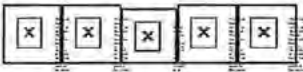
I will see the email from James on the other issue of reduced Medicare rebate for private path covid tests.

Regards. J

Dr John Wakefield PSM
Director-General
Queensland Health

Phone: **Irrelevant**
Address: 1 William Street, Brisbane 4000
Email: **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au

Queensland Health
Office of the Director-General



www.health.qld.gov.au

Queensland's Health Vision: By 2026 Queenslanders will be among the healthiest people in the world.

Queensland Health acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land, and pays respect to Elders past, present and future.

Begin forwarded message:

From: James K Smith **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Date: 9 December 2021 at 6:22:37 pm AEST
To: "COVID-19.IMT" **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>, Lynne McKinlay **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>, Peter Aitken **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>, John Wakefield **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Cc: "COVID-19.IMT" **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Subject: Re: For URGENT action | Ceasing of MBS item 69501 for private sector pathology and impacts 4x dedicated freight COVID-19 testing locations (private pathology operated)

Hi Deb

Brett's proposal looks very reasonable to me, too.

However, while this seems appropriate I think there will need to be a little more higher level discussion to ensure the relevant parties at DG level within QH, TMR and Treasury agree with this.

I have copied in CHO and DG.

James

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: COVID-19.IMT **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, December 9, 2021 6:02 pm
To: James K Smith
Cc: COVID-19.IMT
Subject: FW: For URGENT action | Ceasing of MBS item 69501 for private sector pathology and impacts 4x dedicated freight COVID-19 testing locations (private pathology operated)

Hi James, I believe you may be more across this than me but the suggestions below seem reasonable. However as this crosses jurisdictions is there any move to seek an extension of the unique Medicare item (69501) past end Jan 2022?
Regards, Deb

From: Brett Bricknell **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 9 December 2021 4:20 PM
To: COVID-19.IMT **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>; Lynne McKinlay **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Cc: Matt Ford **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Subject: FW: For URGENT action | Ceasing of MBS item 69501 for private sector pathology and impacts 4x dedicated freight COVID-19 testing locations (private pathology operated)
Importance: High

PHIC

Hi team

Are you happy for me to advise the following in response to this issue

1. TMR to enter into a funding agreement with these providers instead for this testing, with funding to be covered under the NPA (TMR to pay and claim back from Treasury like Health)
2. Need to establish a price but one option is simply to pay them the equivalent price new Medicare rebate price of \$93.80
3. As the lead agency they should continue to manage directly rather than Health

We are of course happy to help them engage

Thanks
Brett

From: Tina L Hight **Irrelevant** @tmr.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 9 December 2021 3:54 PM

To: Brett Bricknell **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Cc: Matt Ford **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>; Simon Hicks **Irrelevant** @tmr.qld.gov.au>; Sarah L Kasteel **Irrelevant** @tmr.qld.gov.au>; SHECC TMR-LO_FREIGHT **Irrelevant** @tmr.qld.gov.au>; Response.Lead.Engagement <**Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>; Aimee Du Toit **Irrelevant** @health.qld.gov.au>
Subject: For URGENT action | Ceasing of MBS item 69501 for private sector pathology and impacts 4x dedicated freight COVID-19 testing locations (private pathology operated)
Importance: High

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Hi Brett

Hope this find you well. Please see email below.

As discussed with Matt, please can you kindly seek urgent advice from QLD Health - COVID Incident Management Team about what funding arrangements will be in place when MBS item 69501 ceases on 1 January 2022.

CwltH release

To assist states and territories with interstate rail crew and transport worker border crossings, the Australian Government created a unique Medicare item (69501), available to rail crew workers or heavy vehicle drivers who are required to travel interstate for work. MBS item 69501 is available for COVID-19 tests performed by private sector pathology providers who are approached directly by an interstate transport worker for a test. MBS item 69501 will cease on 1 January 2022.

As you are aware TMR has established 4x freight dedicated testing facilities, operated by 4Cyte and QML. This Medicare cessation will call into question the viability of these facilities to continue if there is no funding in place.

For greater context whilst the QLD Freight Protocol is being amended next week to align with acceptable risk levels associated easing of border restrictions, the 7 day rolling surveillance testing will remain for freight. To date, no discussions have been held regarding the CHO's posturing for QLD asymptomatic testing of freight and logistics operators post 1 January 2022.

Also, 5x NSW freight-friendly testing sites are also closing on the 15th Dec. and the remaining will close for a Christmas period, increasing pressure on the QLD system.

I will need to convene a meeting to discuss as soon as feasible.

Please can you kindly keep us advised of your discussions with QLD Health and A/ CHO Dr Peter Aitken (I believe Dr Aitken is resuming DDG duties) as this is an issue that is escalated to Minister Bailey and TMR DG-Scales.

Available to discuss.

Cheers, Tina

Tina Hightet

A/Director | Heavy Vehicle Operations
Land Transport Safety and Regulation Branch | Customer Services, Safety and Regulation Division |
Department of Transport and Main Roads

M: Irrelevant | (07) Irrelevant
Irrelevant@tmr.qld.gov.au@tmr.qld.gov.au

Unite against COVID-19

From: Tina L Highet
Sent: Wednesday, 8 December 2021 2:59 PM
To: Irrelevant @health.qld.gov.au
Subject: Ceasing of MBS item 69501 for private sector pathology

Hi Matt

Please see attached advice from Cwlth as regards the following:

To assist states and territories with interstate rail crew and transport worker border crossings, the Australian Government created a unique Medicare item (69501), available to rail crew workers or heavy vehicle drivers who are required to travel interstate for work. MBS item 69501 is available for COVID-19 tests performed by private sector pathology providers who are approached directly by an interstate transport worker for a test. MBS item 69501 will cease on 1 January 2022.

The cost associated with interstate transport worker COVID-19 testing provided by state and territory governments continues to be covered under the National Partnership on COVID-19 Response (Partnership). The Australian Government provides financial support to all state and territory governments for COVID-19 testing through the Partnership, funding 50 per cent of the costs of public health testing facilities. Under the Partnership, all governments have committed to providing COVID-19 pathology testing to people in Australia free of-charge, including freight and transport workers.

Through the Partnership, the Australian Government has provided over \$7.0 billion in funding to support state and territory health systems respond to COVID-19 outbreaks as of 7 November 2021. In particular, the Partnership has provided \$270.0 million in the 2020-21 and 2021-22 financial years in direct funding to COVID-19 PCR testing delivered in state and territory clinics. Partnership funding is demand driven with no cap on funding.

This mechanism for the Australian Government to support ready access to testing for COVID-19 has been in place since the start of the pandemic and has worked well to support testing as a critical component of our successful response. A fundamental principle remains, and should continue, no costs should be imposed on those requiring a test, including necessary testing associated with border crossings.

Where COVID-19 testing is medically necessary and has been requested by a doctor, it is appropriately funded by the Australian Government through the MBS.

Where COVID-19 testing is undertaken for public health purposes, for example asymptomatic testing for travel, workplace testing, or testing of casual or close contacts, it is appropriately funded through the Partnership.

Based

What does this mean for providers?

The introduction of this new item affords private sector pathology providers the ability to provide microbiology for SARS-CoV-2 to:

- asymptomatic workers of residential and in-home aged care service providers in Victoria; and
- asymptomatic freight workers who are required to travel interstate as a driver of a heavy vehicle or crew.

This item is not to be claimed with other pathology items. A patient episode initiation (PEI) rebate or bulk incentive (BBI) will not be applicable with MBS item 69501. However, an MBS fee has been applied to the item 69501 so that it is equivalent to the total MBS rebate paid for MBS item 69480 when claimed with the PEI and BBI for a private sector collection centre sample (MBS item 73928 and MBS item 74995). A PEI or BBI has not been applied to MBS item 69501 as the Government may assist with collecting samples, which would otherwise be eligible for PEI or BBI.

Testing services under the new item can only be provided by private sector pathology providers, must be performed in a laboratory and are not available to hospital in-patients.

The item requires reporting of test results to all appropriate authorities in accordance with the relevant state legislation or regulations and patients, within 24 hours of receipt of the specimen.

Testing for asymptomatic workers who are required to travel interstate as a driver of a heavy vehicle can only be performed nationally.

Testing for asymptomatic workers of residential and in-home aged care service providers is only available for those who are employed, hired, retained or contracted by an aged care service provider in Victoria.

Tina Highet

A/Director | Heavy Vehicle Operations

Land Transport Safety and Regulation Branch | Customer Services, Safety and Regulation Division |

Department of Transport and Main Roads

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Irrelevant @tmr.qld.gov.au@tmr.qld.gov.au

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RTI Released

Luke Richmond

From: SDLO Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 27 December 2021 9:51 AM
To: Amy Louise Melville; CLLO; Daniel Goodman; Darren Brown; Darren Cann; David Harmer; Dawn Schofield; DL-ELT_Personal; Estimates; Genevieve Siddle; James K Smith; Joanne Kalaja; Kirsten Ram; Kyle Fogarty; Luan Sadikaj; Lucy Collier; Luke Richmond; Lynne McKinlay; Martin Philip; MinDLO; Miranda Claughton; news; Olivia McLean; Peter Aitken; Rachel Hoffman; Rachel Vowles; Renaie Tesch; Response Lead - Policy; Response.Lead; SHECC; Simon Zanatta; Tracey Lenz; Trish Nielsen
Cc: Kirsten MacGregor; Jess Hogan
Subject: URGENT - HIB - COVID-19 testing capacity
Attachments: HIB_COVID-19 testing capacity_20211227.docx; HIB_COVID-19 testing capacity_20211227 (002).pdf

Good morning,
Please find attached advance copy of the HIB requested. This will be updated for tomorrow.

Kind regards,
Miranda



Miranda Claughton

A/Director
Ministerial & Executive Services Unit, Office of the
Director-General & System Strategy
Division | Queensland Health

P Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au
E Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au
W health.qld.gov.au
A [1 William Street](http://1WilliamStreet)



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From: Kat Acampora Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 27 December 2021 7:15 AM
To: SDLO Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>; Dawn Schofield Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>; Kyle Fogarty Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>; CHO COVID Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>
Cc: Kirsten MacGregor Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>; Jess Hogan Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>; news Irrelevant@health.qld.gov.au>
Subject: URGENT - HIB - testing capacity

Hey all,

Apologies for the urgent email.
The Ministers office has requested an urgent HIB on testing capacity - they want it ASAP. See below message.

"Can I get a clear hib on what/how many testing clinics are open today? How many people Working at them? Premier is up at 10am. Telecon at 9"

Cheers,
Kat

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Hot Issues Brief

COVID-19 Testing Clinics

27 December 2021

Issue:

- As at Monday 27 December 2021 (public holiday), Queensland has 123 of its 130 testing locations operating, noting that a number of these are by appointment only.
- There are over 230 private pathology testing locations in Queensland, however, most of these sites have been closed from 25 to 27 December 2021.
- Queensland Health staff are continuing to work over the Christmas and New Year period to ensure that testing sites are up and running, with minimal disruptions to locations and hours of service. The total number of staff working across these sites is not available.
- Between public and private laboratories, Queensland can process around 60,000 COVID-19 PCR tests per day.

Background:

- Media agencies are reporting that there are delays for the public to receive a COVID-19 PCR test and the associated results over the holiday period.
- On 27 December 2021, the Courier-Mail published the article 'COVID Qld: Families in limbo as test result waiting times blow out'.
- In response to increases in cases since the opening of the border on the 13 December, the requirement for a GP referral to private pathology was waived on 17 December 2021.
- The following factors increases demand for PCR testing in Queensland:
 - Increasing cases in the community and subsequent increase in close contacts.
 - Increasing public exposure sites, including high-traffic locations such as shopping centres and restaurants, pubs and clubs in the lead up to Christmas.
 - Day 5 testing requirements for arrivals from interstate hotspots.
 - Pre-departure testing requirements for Queenslanders travelling to other jurisdictions that consider Queensland a hotspot.
- The following factors decreases demand for PCR testing in Queensland:
 - The shorter 7-day quarantine period for vaccinated close contacts. People need 2 tests when in 7-day quarantine compared to 3 tests for 14 days quarantine.
 - Removal of pre and post arrival testing requirements for interstate travel.
- A table showing the current status of PCR testing across all Queensland Hospital and Health Service catchments for 27 December 2021 is at appendix 1.

Actions to date:

- A number of Hospital and Health Services have identified an ability to increase their number of testing locations as surge capacity over the Christmas period, ability to extend hours and through put, and ability to mobilise 24 hours capacity. This was in addition to the number of routine clinics already established.
- The most recent status of these measures as of 27 December 2021 are:
 - Cairns HHS - Concierge triage in place outside clinics to help prioritise testing for vulnerable cohorts. Additional staff added and working on increasing opening hours into the evening
 - Gold Coast HHS – Looking to increase staff today to meet demand
 - Metro South HHS:
 - have opened up a drive through at Logan West, for at least a few days to mitigate the reduced hours of private pathology
 - not extending formal opening hours but have extended staffing for several hours after formal closing time to meet the existing line (at closing time)
 - Metro North HHS - while opening hours remain the same (cannot extended beyond 0800-2100), have prioritised additional staffing to be put on the RBWH
 - Sunshine Coast HHS – main concern is Noosa currently. Further update pending.
 - COVAX

Prepared by: Miranda Thompson
Position: A/Director, MESU
Telephone: Irrelevant
Date: 29 December 2021

Approved by: Dawn Schofield
Position: Executive Director,
ODG&SSD
Telephone: Irrelevant
Date: 29 December 2021

DLT Member / HSCE: Dawn Schofield
Position: Executive Director, ODG&SSD
Telephone: Irrelevant
Date: 29 December 2021



Queensland
Government

- UQ clinic has seen large numbers
- RNA showground is scheduled to open tomorrow (28/12)

Media response:

- A media holding statement has been prepared and a copy submitted with this HIB
- A media holding statement is not required

Confidential Information

- Turnaround times of private laboratories is commercial-in-confidence and not reported to Queensland Health, but is typically within 24 hours noting that this may increase to 48 hours during peak periods.

Contact person:

Dr Peter Aiken, Deputy Chief Health Officer on **Irrelevant**

Appendix 1 – COVID-19 PCR testing clinic summary for 27 December 2021

Hospital and Health Service Catchment	QH span of hours for testing	Private provider span of hours
Cairns and Hinterland HHS	7:30 – 20:00	All closed
Central Queensland HHS	6:30 – 14:00	All closed
Central West HHS	By appointment	All closed
Children's Health Queensland HHS	8:00-16:00	N/A
Darling Downs HHS	8:00 – 15:00	4Cyte at Goondiwindi for Heavy Vehicles
Gold Coast HHS	9:00 – 16:30	All open
Mackay HHS	8:30 – 16:00 & integrated with Emergency Departments	All closed
Metro North HHS	8:00 – 21:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QML – Ashgrove – 8:00 – 12:00 • SNP – all open – 6:30 – 12:00 • 4Cyte – all open (except Narangba) – span 7:00 – 16:30
Metro South HHS	8:00 – 16:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QML – all open (except Rocklea and Victoria Point) – span 7:00 – 18:00 • SNP – Beenleigh – 9:00 – 12:00 • 4Cyte – drive-throughs at Carina, Eight Mile Plains, Highgate Hill – span 8:00 – 16:00
North West HHS	On-call or by appointment and (Mt Isa clinic 24 hours)	All closed
South West HHS	By appointment	N/A
Sunshine Coast HHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nambour General Hospital – 8:00 – 16:00 • Gympie Hospital – closed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QML – All open – 7:00 – 12:00 • SNP – Nambour drive through – 9:00 – 15:00 • 4Cyte – all open – span 7:00-15:30
Torres and Cape HHS	Bamaga 24 hours	N/A
Townsville HHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1300 SMILES – 8:00 – 18:00 • Ayr Health Service – 24 hours • Magnetic Island – closed 	All closed
West Moreton HHS	Closed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QML – Raceview pop-up – 8:00 – 14:00 • SNP – Ipswich drive through – 9:00 – 12:00 • 4Cyte – 6:30 – 16:00
Wide Bay HHS	Closed	All closed