

NSW Government's management of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Thursday 7 May 2020 Hearing

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

Note: Responses to Supplementary Questions 1, 2 and 7, due to the Committee by 8 June 2020, are provided in this document. All other Supplementary Questions will be responded to by 22 June 2020, as requested by the Committee.

QUESTION 1

1. On 24 April 2020 the Premier announced a target for testing in New South Wales of 8000 tests per day. Since then testing has been consistently lower. As at the date of the hearing we had hit 8000 twice, once on 1 May and then once the previous day. The testing numbers in NSW were lower than Victoria's testing numbers during its testing blitz.

- (a) What is the problem here?
- (b) The Australian health protection principles committee on 13 March 2020 noted "marks a global shortage of some reagents". Is that still the problem?
- (c) Is it a lack of test materials?
- (d) Is it a lack of laboratory processing facilities?
- (e) Is it a lack of an appropriately trained workforce?
- (f) Is it a communication problem with the community?
- (g) Is it a lack of accessible COVID-19 clinics?

ANSWER

1 (a)-(g)

In the five week period between 24 April and 30 May 2020, the average number of tests completed per day was 8,274. Testing information is included in the weekly COVID-19 surveillance report.

NSW Health is encouraging everyone with symptoms to present for testing at one of the more than 200 testing sites or through their general practitioner. This message is being supported through communications strategies delivered by NSW Health and the NSW Government.

Public and private laboratories are working to provide timely, accurate, reliable and safe COVID-19 testing. There are no issues with reagent shortages, workforce or laboratory access.

QUESTION 2

2. Media reports have suggested that the west of Sydney has replaced the east of Sydney as the virus hotspot. Why have we tested only 16,392 people in the western Sydney area health service compare to 38,183 people in the Eastern Sydney area health - approximately half the number? (Figures as at the 7th May).

ANSWER

More tests have been performed per capita in South Eastern Sydney Local Health District than in Western Sydney Local Health District as a result of deliberate targeting of that community following detection of COVID-19 cases.

NSW Health is encouraging everyone with symptoms to present for testing. All Local Health Districts are implementing local strategies to maintain high testing rates and maximise accessibility, including through the deployment of pop-up COVID-19 clinics to boost testing rates in particular areas.

QUESTION 7

7. The Commonwealth government has released its modelling. Will New South Wales release its modelling for the impact of the virus on New South Wales?

ANSWER

NSW COVID-19 modelling has focused on a range of scenarios to support health system preparedness. This modelling is intended for internal use only and is not appropriate for public release.