



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

STANDING COMMITTEE ON LAW AND JUSTICE

MEDIA RELEASE

INQUIRY INTO THE MANDATORY DISEASE TESTING BILL 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

8 February 2021

The Standing Committee on Law and Justice in the NSW Legislative Council will hold public hearings for its inquiry into the Mandatory Disease Testing Bill 2020 on 11 and 12 February 2021.

At these hearings, the committee will hear from unions representing affected workers, public health advocacy organisations, medical and legal specialists, academics and relevant government agencies.

The Committee Chair, The Hon Wes Fang MLC, said: 'This bill seeks to establish a mandatory testing scheme for specified blood-borne diseases in circumstances where police, emergency services and health workers have been exposed to possible risk of transmission by the deliberate act of a third party. It aims to assist these frontline workers if they are exposed to the bodily fluids of others in the course of their duties. The risk of contracting blood-borne diseases in these situations is a cause of stress and anxiety for those workers and their families. Currently there is no mechanism in New South Wales that requires or compels a person whose bodily fluids were involved in an exposure incident to be tested for infectious diseases, and that is the gap this Bill aims to address. The committee plans to look at how the proposed mandatory testing scheme will operate and whether the Bill provides certain safeguards, particularly for vulnerable people and minors'.

The inquiry was referred on 17 November 2020, and made a public call for submissions, with a closing date of 21 December 2020. The committee received 27 submissions from interested unions, community organisations, academics and professional associations, as well as the NSW Police.

The public hearing schedules, submissions received, and further information about the inquiry, is available on the committee's website: www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lawandjustice.

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For further information please contact Committee Chair, the Hon Wes Fang MLC, on 9230 2888