



Newsletter: 766/2021

Date: 26 August 2021

Distribution: All ambulance members

Contact: Your HSU Delegate



Fight to have rapid antigen testing deployed in LGAs of concern.

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ADHSU delegates attended a meeting on Tuesday with the Service about having rapid antigen testing deployed sooner rather than later. Rapid antigen testing is self-administered by crews, takes around 15 minutes, and gives members peace of mind that they are not going to take the virus home with them. It also gives the public confidence that paramedics aren't going to spread the virus to vulnerable patients.

Unfortunately, the Ambulance Service representatives were in a combative mood and were unreceptive to ADHSU views that the testing should be deployed to all staff, but the priority given to those who are most likely to come into contact with COVID positive patients. When asked if they were going to deploy the testing at stations in 'LGAs of concern' they said no, '*operational demand takes precedence to the testing*' – or to put it another way, they don't want to take crews off the road while the testing takes place, even though it's only a 15-minute process.

They are limiting the testing to other areas such as headquarters. ADHSU members made it clear that the testing must also be deployed to road crews, in particular for those who are working out of stations in the nominated LGA areas of concern. They again said no.

NSWA made it very clear that they will no longer be consulting ADHSU on COVID matters and that we can read about their decisions in their daily emails to staff. That leaves ADHSU members with little choice but to resort to collective action to protect each other and the public.

ADHSU council recommends the following ban starting first day shift Monday 30 August.

'On a shift-to-shift basis, no ADHSU member working out of a station in a defined Local government area of concern is to respond to any patient until they have been rapidly antigen or PCR tested, this ban will only be lifted if the current NSW Health requirements for rapid antigen testing in Local Government areas of concern is removed.'

Please indicate your support for this ban by voting [here](#).

If the ban is endorsed, NSWA will have to find more tests, deploy them to road staff, and allow them the miserly 15 minutes at the start of the 12-hour shift to test themselves before sending them to the first job.

In unity,

Gerard Hayes
Secretary, HSU NSW/ACT/QLD