

media release



Thursday, 23 December 2021

Scott Morrison abandons working Australians with callous indifference on Rapid Antigen Testing

The Prime Minister's callous indifference on the costs of Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT), on full display during his press conference yesterday, Wednesday December 22nd, confirms yet again that working Australians cannot rely on Scott Morrison to have their back in times of need.

When asked whether he would make RATs free for Australians who need them, Mr Morrison suggested the Government shouldn't have to, because the tests are "tax deductible", and used his own purchase of a RAT to suggest it wasn't the Government's job to fix the problem anyway.

When a journalist specifically put to Mr Morrison that "*not everyone can afford Rapid Antigen Tests*", the PM glibly replied, "*some people can, some people can't*".

In October of this year Unions and Business came together to warn Scott Morrison of the need to get ahead of the curve on expensive RATs. He didn't listen. He didn't act.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Acting Secretary Liam O'Brien:

"Unions and business urged the Prime Minister to make Rapid Antigen Tests free back in October, but he didn't do anything about it - and now we have testing sites jammed and a looming crisis on our hands.

"A single test can cost up to \$20, if you're lucky enough to find a chemist that still has them. That's \$100 for Mum, Dad and the three kids. That might be small change to the Prime Minister, but it's out of reach for many families.

"Scott Morrison's callous indifference to Australians who cannot afford the sky-high costs of Rapid Antigen Tests proves yet again that working people cannot trust this Prime Minister to be there when they need him.

"Mr Morrison says the tests are tax deductible. That's fine if, like him, you can afford to pay the cost up front and wait around until tax time to get your money back, but it's completely out of the question for most working Australians.

"When a journalist specifically put to the Prime Minister that not everybody can afford Rapid Antigen Tests, Mr Morrison simply shrugged his shoulders, saying "*some people can, some people can't*", and suggested it wasn't his job to fix the problem anyway.

"President Joe Biden is making Rapid Antigen Tests free in America, while in our country they remain inaccessible and unaffordable. It is shameful that under Scott Morrison, Australia has once again fallen behind America's broken health system.

"Working people have been through two years of living hell with the Covid pandemic, made worse by Scott Morrison's botched vaccine rollout. Australians need Covid tests before they travel to see elderly and at risk loved ones for Christmas. Mr Morrison's failure on Rapid Antigen Testing could not come at a worse time".

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