

Thursday 30 December 2021

## Morrison dodges pandemic responsibility once again

Unions are urging the Morrison Government to make rapid antigen tests free and accessible across all states and territories to take some pressure off family budgets and PCR testing.

The Morrison Government is once again trying to pass its pandemic responsibilities onto states and territories, only proposing an unclear stockpile and to pay for half the costs of rapid antigen testing. Victoria and NSW's decision to make some free rapid tests available is welcome, however, this must be nationwide and fully supported by the Federal Government.

Accessibility is becoming increasingly difficult as Covid cases reach over 11,000 in NSW and spreads throughout every state and territory.

Unions and businesses have been calling for free testing since October, instead Morrison decided to once again leave Australians behind while the UK and USA governments provide free and accessible rapid antigen testing.

Rapid testing is scarce and out of reach for many Australians who are already financially stretched from the pandemic and rapidly rising costs for family testing.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"Once again PM Morrison is dodging federal government responsibility during the pandemic, leaving Australians to the lottery of lack of supply and differing state and territory approaches to rapid antigen testing.

"The Morrison Government can't continue to avoid responsibility for testing accessibility and affordability as Covid spreads across every state and territory in the nation.

"Right now, 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 a family of five. That might be small change to the Prime Minister, but it's out of reach for many families.

"Unions and businesses have been calling on the Morrison Government to provide free rapid antigen testing since October, instead they've done nothing. Now Australia is lagging behind the developed world, including the USA's chaotic healthcare system, in providing free and accessible testing."

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