
How much is COVID-19 testing costing Australian taxpayers?

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Thu, Dec 23, 2021 at 11:58 AM

To: Greg.Hunt.MP@aph.gov.au

For the attention of:

Mr Greg Hunt
Federal Minister for Health and Aged Care

Dear Mr Hunt, an article in *The Australian* today reports: [Mad scramble for tests sparks Christmas holiday chaos](#).
(See copy attached.)

Sor far in Australia over 52.5 million COVID-19 tests have been conducted with 0.5% being positive.[1]

Can you please advise how much this testing is costing the Australian taxpayer?

With so few positives being picked up in broad-based testing, this appears to be a grossly inefficient use of resources.

A WHO report providing guidance for surveillance during an influenza pandemic, published in 2017, recommends **"case-based reporting (the counting of individual cases) should cease once there is broad community transmission in a country - at this point, syndromic data from sentinel sites, hospital-based data and systematic laboratory testing should be used instead"**. [2]

Doesn't this mean that widespread testing of asymptomatic people should be ceased?

In a *BMJ* article published last year, Allyson Pollock, a UK professor of public health, says mass screening proposals risk causing harm through **"significant diversion of healthcare resources"**. [3]

There must be an urgent reappraisal of the worth of mass testing.

Again, what has been the cost to taxpayers so far of over 52.5 million COVID-19 tests, including costs associated with this testing?

I look forward to your early response.

Kind regards
Elizabeth Hart

References:

1. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Case numbers and statistics (as at 23 December 2021): <https://www.health.gov.au/health-alerts/covid-19/case-numbers-and-statistics>
2. Gareth Iacobucci. Covid-19: Government ramps up "Moonshot" mass testing. *The BMJ*, 17 November 2020: <https://www.bmj.com/content/bmj/371/bmj.m4460.full.pdf>
3. WHO guidance for surveillance during an influenza pandemic. 2017 update: https://www.who.int/influenza/preparedness/pandemic/WHO_Guidance_for_surveillance_during_an_influenza_pandemic_082017.pdf

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