

Date: 24 April 2020

Call to the people of Armidale and Tamworth to increase COVID-19 testing

Hunter New England Health is calling on Armidale and Tamworth locals to increase testing rates during a one week COVID-19 testing blitz, starting Monday 27 April.

Specialised COVID-19 clinics are being set up at both hospitals to assist with boosting testing numbers across both communities.

This is being done as part of Hunter New England Health's focus on identifying areas where testing is relatively low and further investigation is needed to ensure an accurate picture of COVID-19 occurrence across the District.

Public Health Physician, Dr David Durrheim said the week-long blitz will help the District better understand COVID-19's spread across Hunter New England, especially as cases stabilise.

"Our goal for blitz week is to push testing rates as high as possible so we can be absolutely sure there is no COVID-19 risk for the people in these towns. We don't expect to find big numbers of cases – or indeed many at all – but testing is the only way we will know for sure.

"It's especially important you get tested if you have cold or flu-like symptoms such as fever, sore throat, cough or shortness of breath. Likewise if you've recently travelled internationally, or on a cruise ship, or been in touch with a person confirmed to have COVID-19.

"If you don't have symptoms or risk factors but are concerned about your health, you can also contact your local clinic to arrange testing," he said.

Those wishing to be tested can contact their GP or one of the drive through COVID-19 clinics at Armidale or Tamworth hospitals.

These clinics are available for a limited time but may be extended depending on demand.

The Armidale clinic is operating 10am to 2pm from Monday 27 April until Friday 1 May.

People should call 0427 923 080 (between 9am and 4.30pm on testing days) to register before attending the clinic.

The Tamworth clinic is operating 9am to 4pm from Monday 27 April until Sunday 3 May.

People should call 1800 881 568 (during testing hours) to register before attending the clinic.

Dr Durrheim has also asked that anyone who is exhibiting symptoms isolate at home until they have received further advice from their GP or the hospital.