

**Date:** 18 May 2020

## **COVID-19 testing blitzed in Newcastle, Tamworth and Armidale**

The people of Newcastle, Tamworth and Armidale have blitzed COVID-19 testing with the boom gates closing on the drive-through clinics last week.

With over 1,100 people tested at Armidale and 3,200 at Tamworth during the four-week testing blitz, and over 7,700 at the McDonald Jones Stadium Clinic in the ten-day blitz, Public Health Physician, Dr David Durrheim congratulated residents for their testing efforts.

“This is an amazing achievement and shows how dedicated we are to ensuring our towns remain safe from COVID-19.

“Pleasingly, we have had no positive cases so far but some results are still being processed. He said.

“With the large number of people being tested across the District it can take up to 72 hours to receive results, so we urge people who have yet to hear their results to be patient while they wait,” he said.

Dr Durrheim also warns that while it’s great news that no new cases have been found, people should be careful not to relax and undo the good work that has been done.

“These communities have done an amazing job increasing testing rates to give us a better picture of whether the virus is currently being transmitted in the community.”

“It’s good news but there is a possibility the virus can be reintroduced so there is still a need for vigilance with social distancing, good hygiene and testing to continue for anyone with symptoms, especially as restrictions ease,” he said.

Anyone who has experienced fever or the recent onset of respiratory symptoms, including a cough, shortness of breath or a sore throat should contact their GP, or present to their local hospital or COVID-19 clinic for testing.

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

The testing blitz is continuing in the New England region with clinics operating at Inverell, Glen Innes and Gunnedah.

Clinics at Calvary Mater Newcastle, John Hunter, Maitland, and Belmont hospitals continue to operate for Newcastle and Hunter locals.