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Minister for Families and Communities
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MEDIA RELEASE

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MILLIONS OF FREE RAPID ANTIGEN TESTS FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS

The NSW Government will provide millions of free Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) to vulnerable cohorts, including people with disability, children and young people in out-of-home care, vulnerable multicultural communities and Aboriginal communities to support early identification and treatment for COVID-19.

Minister for Families and Communities and Minister for Disability Services Natasha Maclaren-Jones said up to 7.9 million RATs will be available to ensure protection for some of the most vulnerable in our community.

“We want to ensure that rapid antigen tests are easily accessible to those who need it most, to keep them safe against COVID-19 through the coming winter period,” Mrs Maclaren-Jones said.

“Given the higher risks for some cohorts, including people with disability if they contract COVID-19, ensuring early diagnosis and treatment is vital.”

The free RATs are now being progressively rolled out at locations across the state.

Those who are eligible will be able to access tests through their disability service provider or directly through statewide neighbourhood centres funded by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

Vulnerable people who test positive for COVID-19 on a RAT are reminded to confirm the result with a PCR test to enable timely access to anti-viral medications and medical support, should it be required.

The program will initially run for four months, with a review to determine whether it should be extended toward the end of winter.

Physical Disability Council of NSW CEO Serena Ovens said people with disability, their support workers, carers, and family deserved access to free RATs to ensure they were not being forgotten.

“We need to protect those who are among the most at risk from COVID-19, particularly as we enter the winter months to ensure that people with a disability can safely get back to doing what they love,” Ms Ovens said.

National Disability Services Senior Manager State & Territory Operations Karen Stace said they welcomed the much needed distribution of free RATs for people with disability.

“It is great to see the Government making it a priority to protect some of the most vulnerable in our community by allowing people with disability to access as many RATs as they need, particularly as we head into the winter months,” Ms Stace said.

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