

## **8.5. Response to Notice of Motion - Rapid Antigen Testing**

**AUTHOR:** Shane Sullivan, Executive Manager Governance

**ATTACHMENTS:** Nil

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to report to Council in accordance with the resolution of Council at its meeting of 24 January 2022 regarding the potential for Council to administer Rapid Antigen Tests.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Commencing this meeting of Council, Council will be requiring all attendees at Council Meetings to provide evidence of or a declaration of an appropriate negative test prior to entering the Chambers. This requirement is in addition to a number of COVID safety measures already in place including but not limited to physical distancing and mask wearing.

Should Council determine to administer the rapid antigen test to all attendees, this should be done by a suitable health practitioner and in accordance with the Therapeutic Goods Administration guidelines. The direct cost of this is between \$720 and \$1,080 per Council Meeting.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Council has obtained a quotation for the provision of point-of-care testing prior to Council Meetings.

For the period 5.30pm to 6.30pm the cost would be \$416.25. This is \$92.50 per hour with double time payable after 6pm. A minimum four hour shift is payable.

It is recommended by the supplier that Council have two technicians to manage the number of anticipated people in the period immediately prior to the meeting. The cost of two technicians would be \$832.50 per meeting.

The tests themselves cost \$250 for a box of 25 kits. There are consumables required also at a cost of \$1.50 per test. Thirty tests would cost \$345

The total estimated cost per meeting is \$1,177.50. This is on the assumption of two technicians and thirty tests.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**1.THAT** Council note the report

**2.THAT** that the current process with regard to Rapid Antigen Testing for Council Meetings be reviewed by way of a further report to Council to its May 2022 Meeting.

## **LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

The relationship with the Community Strategic Plan is as follows:

### **4. Our Social Vitality**

#### **4.1 North Sydney is connected, inclusive, healthy and safe**

## **BACKGROUND**

At its meeting held 24 January 2022, Council resolved as follows:

- 1. THAT all attendees, staff, visitors, and Councillors to North Sydney Council Meetings provide evidence or declaration of a negative rapid antigen test taken within the previous two days (or a negative PCR test within the previous four days) before entering the Council chambers.*
- 2. THAT if Rapid antigen tests are unable to be sourced then the meeting should be held by remote or hybrid meeting.*
- 3. THAT a further report be presented to Council regarding the potential for Council to administer the tests.*
- 4. THAT this motion be reviewed in 3 months' time*

A process has been implemented to meet the requirements of parts 1 and 2 and will be in place for the Council Meeting of 21 February 2022.

## **CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS**

Community engagement is not required.

## **DETAIL**

### **Current status**

The current process in accordance with the resolution of Council of 24 January 2022 requires that all attendees, staff, visitors and Councillors to North Sydney Council Meetings provide evidence or a declaration of:

- a negative rapid antigen test taken within the previous two days or
- a negative PCR test within the previous four days

This evidence or declaration is required prior to entering the Council Chambers.

There is no current requirement under a Public Health Order for those attending Council Meetings to have had a negative rapid antigen test.

## **Rapid Antigen Testing**

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) have approved two methods of rapid antigen testing. There are the self-testing kits which can be done by the individual and do not require medical supervision.

The other method is point-of-care testing which is implemented on-site and requires medical supervision. These tests are considered by the TGA to be appropriate for larger-scale professional testing.

The TGA has issued guidance (Attached) to assist businesses in understanding the key considerations for the safe implementation of point-of-care testing. This is guidance only and it is not a TGA requirement that Council comply with the requirements for supervision of testing, however it is recommended.

The proposal obtained by staff to administer point-of-care rapid antigen tests includes the provision of medical screeners who are appropriately trained in the correct use of the test and access to a health practitioner responsible for supervision of the testing program. This supervision may be provided remotely.

The provider would be accountable for ensuring appropriate PPE for the testers and the correct disposal of pathological waste.

The provider has indicated they have sufficient supply of the tests to provide the service to Council. In addition, Council currently has some supply for the purpose of maintaining and ensuring the ongoing safety of staff in accordance with our Work Health and Safety obligations. Council has been and will continue to liaise with suppliers regarding stock levels and maintain appropriate stock levels. Advice at the time of preparing this report is that additional stock can be provided within two weeks.

The process for testing would be the following:

- Self-check in for testing using mobile phone
- Rapid antigen test administered
- 15 minute wait time
- Result texted to Councillor, staff or attendee
- If as part of the testing process a person had a positive (non-negative) rapid antigen test the provider would also manage this with a second PCR collection and providing instructions on isolation procedures.

## **Current COVID safe measures**

The following steps are in place to facilitate COVID safe Council Meetings:

- Antimicrobial surface cleaning

- Mask wearing except when addressing Council
- Provision of N95 masks as required
- QR code check in for attendees
- Pre-registration for public attendees
- Attendance of vaccinated staff only at Council Meetings
- Physical distancing as far as practicable
- Ability for remote attendance for Councillors

The current Meeting Regulations provide an exemption permitting Councillors to attend remotely through to 30 June 2022. Council will have the opportunity to consider an extension of this provision as part of the revision of the Model Code of Meeting Practice prior to 30 June 2022.

The above is in addition to the Council resolved requirement for the provision of evidence or declaration of an appropriate negative test.

Enforcement of point of care testing prior to entering the Council Chambers removes the reliance on personal declarations and application of the test by a health professional may improve reliability of the test.

At this time, neither point of care testing or a declaration of having self-completed a Rapid Antigen Test is required before the public attend Council customer services facilities, Library, Administration Centre or other facilities. Attendees at the facility are being managed in accordance with the Public Health Order.

Council has resolved that the process for attendance at Council meetings be reviewed in three months' time. As a result, a report will be provided to Council at its May 2022 meeting..