



Report recommends ongoing improvements to COVID-19 contact tracing and testing

A parliamentary committee [report](#) has called for ongoing monitoring and improvement of Victoria's COVID-19 contact tracing system and testing regime.

The Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee has made 47 findings and 19 recommendations, focusing on the lessons learnt from the experience of the past few months.

“Lessons have been learnt by government and the health department about how we deal with emerging threats to public health particularly infectious disease control,” Committee Chair Fiona Patten said.

“Victoria's processes are robust and have been implemented in response to what has been learnt over the last months. We are now far better prepared should Victoria face a similar situation in the future,” Ms Patten said.

The Committee has recommended using the experience of the pandemic for reviewing, testing and enhancing our public health system towards a more decentralised, community-based approach. We need to get better at identifying and preventing or minimising public health risks to the community.

Other key recommendations include:

- establishing a trained reserve workforce for future public health emergencies
- embedding general practitioners into the system of management of contact tracing and testing as part of a localised, collaborative and more person-centred approach
- developing clear and accessible guidance for businesses on their obligations for contact tracing record keeping, particularly around setting up and using digital systems such as QR codes.

The Committee found that the use of manual data entry processes at the beginning of the pandemic meant that the system for contact tracing and recording of testing was not fit to deal with any escalation of cases and led to significant errors.

Victoria's redeveloped contact tracing system demonstrates that the Victorian Government responded to lessons learnt throughout the pandemic, the Committee said. Nevertheless, further refinements are needed to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

The Committee found that the current COVID-19 testing regime is fit for purpose to monitor, identify, record and communicate up to 15,000 results per day within a 24-hour window. It noted that the Victorian Government is investing in additional capacity which would allow 35,000 tests to be processed per day.

According to the Committee, greater transparency in relation to processes and a willingness to acknowledge and take responsibility for failings by the Victorian Government would increase public trust and confidence in the capacity of the contact tracing system and testing regime.

“Victoria now sits in the enviable position of having effectively eliminated COVID-19 from our community through testing and contact tracing but has had to impose significant restrictions on citizens,” Ms Patten said.

“We have many hard-working health professionals and public sector officers to thank for their contribution and I commend them all for their work. I also acknowledge the outstanding part played by Victorians.”

The report is available from the Committee’s [website](#).

Media queries

Lilian Topic, Senior Committee Manager on 0417322053

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