

CORONAVIRUS — DETECT PROGRAM

**442. Ms M.M. QUIRK to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the state government's efforts to suppress COVID-19 and ensure that Western Australia is well prepared to respond to any outbreaks, should they occur. Can the minister update the house on the results of the DETECT Snapshot testing of asymptomatic workers?

**Mr R.H. COOK replied:**

I thank the member for Girrawheen for the question. It is an important one, because DETECT Snapshot was an outstanding success, thanks to the 18 409 workers who took time out to undergo swab testing to help us get a better understanding of whether COVID-19 was present but undetected in our community. Finding no positive cases amongst this important cohort within our community was an important element of increasing the confidence of not only the government that we have a handle on this disease, but also the community that our efforts have gone a long way in continuing to manage the outbreak of COVID-19.

The DETECT program is a great collaboration between industry and government. The Chamber of Minerals and Energy, along with our friends at HBF, have done an amazing job in supporting this effort. In fact, HBF, our state's largest private health fund, has contributed to the running of DETECT Snapshot, which essentially has provided us with more evidence as we move to ease phase 3 restrictions and, indeed, into the future. HBF has committed \$2.5 million to the project. HBF's contribution will not only cover DETECT Snapshot, but also provide investment that will allow us to undertake other COVID-19 research programs and innovation projects in the future.

The COVID-19 testing blitz has shown no positive cases. This testing blitz ran between 28 May and 10 June and focused on particular cohorts: healthcare workers, Western Australia Police Force staff, school staff, meatworkers, and retail and hospitality workers, including transport workers and tourism industry employees. They were invited to undergo what is called asymptomatic testing, which means that they did not have any of the symptoms that we know are characteristic of COVID-19, but it allowed us to really test because we know that some people are asymptomatic. Of the 18 409 people tested, 11 192 were healthcare workers, 61 per cent; 2 197 were school staff, or 12 per cent; 1 852 were retail workers, about 10 per cent; 925 were hospitality workers, five per cent; and 875 were meatworkers, around five per cent also. WA police staff, transport workers and tourism industry workers accounted for under five per cent each. The median age of people tested was 47 years. Interestingly, 72 per cent were female, so, clearly, male members of the community should have done some more heavy lifting! Just over three-quarters of the participants resided in the metropolitan area.

The program was a major coordinated effort between public and private pathology providers, including PathWest, Australian Clinical Labs, Clinipath Pathology and Western Diagnostic Pathology, and offered as many opportunities as possible to people within the two-week window. Testing was offered at more than 100 clinics, drive-through facilities and pop-up clinics throughout the state, and onsite testing was facilitated at nearly 200 businesses. This was a great opportunity for us to continue to understand the science that is driving the pandemic. We will make sure that we rely upon that science and the advice of the Chief Health Officer to continue to guide us as we come out of our experience of this part of the pandemic. The work that the McGowan government has done to date under the advice of the outstanding Chief Health Officer has contributed significantly to the success that we have had in conjunction with the great efforts of the WA community. I commend all involved.