



### Barwon South West Public Health Unit Testing Response

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#### INTRODUCTION

To enhance the operation of Victoria's COVID-19 case, contact tracing and outbreak management a Regional Response known as the Barwon South West (BSW) Public Health Unit (PHU) evolved; a collaboration between Barwon Health and the Victorian Department of Health.

Enabling early detection of cases through rapid testing supports a rapid and successful outbreak response.

Collaboration and support of all regional Health Services and private pathology providers, engaging our local government and communities has enabled mass testing which has been pivotal in preventing the spread of COVID-19 within the BSW region (population 448,997).

#### OBJECTIVES

1. To suppress the transmission of COVID-19 in the BSW region community by rapid detection of infections and identify their source and chains of transmission
2. Make testing accessible and a positive experience to all members of the community, particularly the vulnerable.
3. Evaluate past performances and implement effective change



#### METHODS + IMPLEMENTATION

- A variety of complimentary testing strategies have been utilised to determine a positive result and the risk this presents to our community by way of transmission
- The predominant testing response strategy we utilise the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test which requires oropharyngeal and nasal swabs, occasionally saliva swabs to be taken and packaged, and then sent to the lab for processing. Secondly, a serology test could reveal those who had the disease and recovered, and confirm infection of some still with symptoms
- Collaborations with Regional Health Services and private pathology providers have been warmly received and reciprocated as we unite to support each others local efforts to meet mass testing demand in various settings to slow the spread in BSW region
- A multidisciplinary approach to bolster our surge workforce, has enabled a large team to enhance the testing response
- Rapid testing and turn around time of results rely on accurate identification and data entry, all of which enable swift decisions to be made in order to enact or revoke a Public Health response
- A focus on continually improving systems, accessibility and connections with our community has fostered a positive experience for our consumers

#### Select Category

- Safe Care     Personal Care  
 Effective Care     Connected Care

#### TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

- Daily huddles within the PHU team to gather expected testing volumes throughout the BSW Region
- Daily reports created on testing numbers were created to demonstrate the impact of change and decision making while managing an outbreak
- Resources were developed to inform and connect with the community
- Pop-up drive through testing locations were identified across the region for mass testing numbers
- Implementation of a digital pathology system (Test Tracker) to improve workflow efficacy
- Collaborative communication of wait times across all BSW testing sites via a WhatsApp

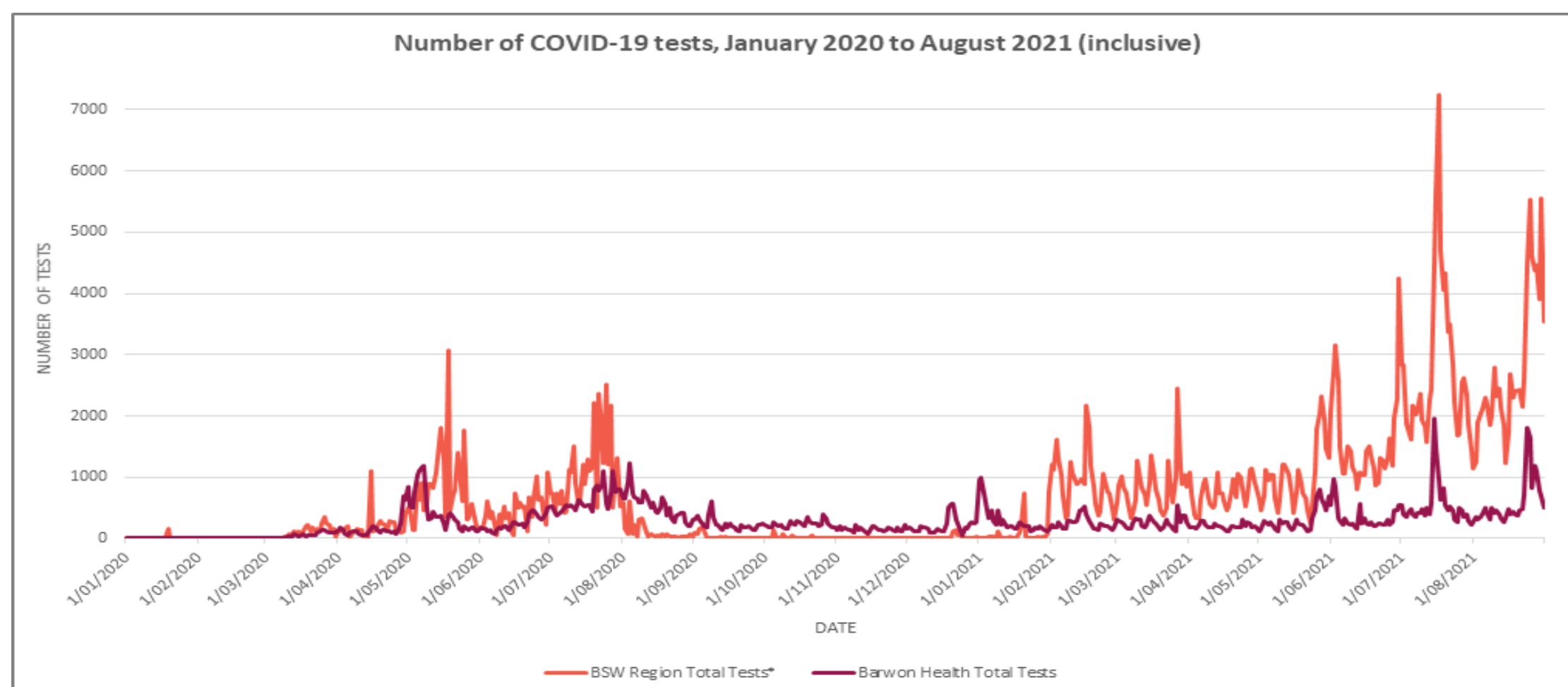
#### RESULTS

##### Achievements

- Best Regional Testing Rate in Victoria with BWS 14 day testing rate 5000 above the Victorian average
- Establishment of mass testing sites within 6hrs
- Ability to stand up testing within a variety of settings within less than 2 hours notice ie. Airport, Abattoirs, Ports, Residential Aged Care, Community
- Barwon Health has tested 42% of the total number of COVID tests in the BSW region since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and has capacity to test up to 3000 per day

Measure	Number
COVID-19 tests performed by Barwon Health and other sites in the BSW Region*	412,537
COVID-19 tests performed by Barwon Health	171,980

Notes: BSW region identified by postcodes in LGAs of BSW+ Golden plain. Includes tests performed from January 2020 to August 2021.



#### KEY LEARNINGS

1. Rapid testing is a key priority of the Public Health response
2. Community engagement, responsiveness, communication, effectiveness, preparedness, efficiencies, quality, safety and evaluation are all critical components to an effective response to COVID-19 in the BSW region
3. Reliable tests results require correct technique, education and reliable pathology laboratories with digital pathology systems enhancing the process
4. Connecting the community, especially our vulnerable and making testing readily accessible is another key driver in the BSW Regions success

#### SUSTAINABILITY

To be sustainable we need to continue to be prepared and keep the community fully informed and engaged, taking into consideration the vulnerable members in our communities and finding ways to connect to identified vulnerable groups. This preparedness allows for a rapid response to testing and in turn suppressing the transmission of COVID-19 in the BWSR community.