

## **Media release: ‘Regulation on the fly’ putting services, workers at risk; Transport workers call for Rapid Antigen Testing and PCR option to be returned**

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29 August 2021, The NSW Government last-minute decision to scrap the option of authorised workers being able to undergo a Rapid Antigen Test or PCR test in order to continue work from next week is a disgraceful attack on the state’s essential workforce, the Rail, Tram and Bus Union says.

Rail, Tram and Bus Union Secretary, Alex Claassens, said a change to the requirements for authorised workers in hotspot LGAs completely ignores the reality of individual circumstances as well as the fact that the NSW Government has continually ignored calls for transport workers to be given access to priority vaccinations.

“Workers were told again on Friday that they had the option of either being vaccinated or having a Rapid Antigen Test or PCR test in order to continue their essential work and earn a wage. A matter of hours later, the Rapid Antigen Test option was taken off the table, leaving families in chaos,” Mr Claassens said.

“The NSW Government has yet again let political sensibilities drive its handling of the COVID crisis.

“Everyone knows that supply, access and distribution of vaccinations has been shambolic. The current requirements don’t take into account personal circumstances at all. Everyone should have the right to access the vaccine that is best suited to them at the time that suits them best.

“After being pushed to offer a balanced and reasonable range of options for authorised workers to continue to do their jobs, the government has had a last minute change of heart, which has left workers high and dry.

“There is no justifiable reason for the government to completely walk away from testing as a valid option.

“This government must immediately put PCR and Rapid Antigen Testing back in place so that the half of Sydney, in total confusion about how to meet their financial obligations come 6 September, have genuine options available to them.

“Hundreds of transport workers have been forced to quarantine over the last few weeks, resulting in serious shortages across our public transport network. There’s no doubt that will only get worse unless the government fixes this mess and reintroduces Rapid Antigen Testing as an option for our authorised workers.”

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