

# Media Release

**The Hon Shaun Leane MLC**  
Minister for Local Government  
Minister for Suburban Development  
Minister for Veterans



Wednesday, 18 May 2022

## KEEPING VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES SAFE FROM COVID-19

The Andrews Labor Government is supporting frontline council staff across Victoria to keep vulnerable communities safe during the pandemic with a rollout of additional Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs).

Minister for Local Government Shaun Leane today announced that the Labor Government has distributed more than 388,000 RATs to Victorian councils for staff to deliver essential services to the community such as maternal and child health, aged care support, and immunisations.

The Government has also provided tests for council staff to distribute to vulnerable communities who find it difficult to access them.

Moonee Valley City Council worker Nerida Fearnley-Gill has been working with vulnerable community members in her role at the council since the beginning of this year. She has directly been assisting people who have had difficulty accessing COVID-19 vaccinations and other services, keeping them safe during the pandemic.

Like many frontline workers employed by councils, Nerida has been out in the field assisting the community every day, often with her therapy dog Bastien by her side, helping people keep healthy and safe.

Nerida's work often takes her into the homes of residents who require in-home support. She understands the importance of having tests readily available for staff who are working directly with the community not only so they know they're not infecting others, but also for the reassurance it provides to the residents they're working with.

Nerida recently assisted 91-year-old resident Carmel who lives independently and needed help as she was required to do a RAT before going into hospital for a procedure. Nerida was able to support Carmel by providing her with a RAT and helping her carry out the test.

The Government continues to provide RATs for councils through a new online ordering portal. Councils are able to log on and place direct orders to ensure their frontline staff have the tests they need to continue the safe delivery of their essential services and support for vulnerable communities.

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Local Government Shaun Leane**

*"Local councils play a critical role in their communities. This is why we are partnering with them to supply more Rapid Antigen Tests so that all members of the community are kept safe during the pandemic."*

### **Quote attributable to Moonee Valley City Council worker Nerida Fearnley-Gill**

*"It's important we're able to test ourselves before we support people in the community, so we know that we're not infecting others and we're also helping them feel safe."*