



## MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 15 June 2021

### **CATHOLIC SECTOR THANKS ST VINCENT'S WORKERS FOR THEIR FRONTLINE COVID TESTING WORK**

Catholic health and aged care operators have hailed St Vincent's Health Sydney workers as health care heroes for their hard work in conducting hundreds of thousands of COVID tests across the city.

Catholic Health Australia says the work done by St Vincent's has been integral to keeping the community as safe as possible in a major pandemic.

Since April when the drive through testing station was established in Bondi Beach at the request of the NSW Government staff at St Vincent's pathology arm SydPath have conducted almost 500,000 tests.

One of the busiest testing sites in Australia, the St Vincent's Bondi drive-thru clinic has been testing up to 4,000 people per day in response to the rising number of local hot-spots being identified.

St Vincent's also rapidly opened a Rushcutters Bay testing clinic in addition to its existing East Sydney Clinic, to support testing for the surrounding hot-spots.

In Western Sydney, SydPath has established testing sites at Rouse Hill, Castle Hill, Merrylands, Carlingford, and Fairfield. SydPath has created a Northern Beaches mass testing site at Forestville, and established a pop-up site at Moree in response to the temporary shortage of testing capacity there.

St Vincent's has been operating a dual Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccination hub at the Hospital for both staff and the community, but in addition it has been going out to the community to help vaccinate the vulnerable, including aged-care residents, and inner-Sydney's rough-sleepers.

The multi-agency response, adopted by St Vincent's, City of Sydney, St Vincent de Paul and other front-line NGOs saw the establishment of a vaccination clinic at Woolloomooloo next to Matthew Talbot Hostel which has vaccinated close to a thousand rough-sleepers. This collaborative approach is being replicated at other sites throughout NSW to help ensure our most vulnerable are prioritised.



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CHA Health Policy Director James Kemp said: "St Vincent's Hospital Sydney has played a central role in responding to the Bondi Covid Cluster which has engulfed NSW. This response has centred around scaling-up both testing capacity and its vaccination capabilities, particularly in supporting inner-Sydney's vulnerable populations.

"Day in, day out St Vincent's staff have donned their PPE and come rain, hail or shine they have been on the frontline testing up to 4,000 people a day in Bondi. They are continuing the proud tradition of the Catholic ministry of healing that was established by the Sisters of Charity more than a century and a half ago. They are our modern-day health care heroes and we thank them for their dedication and sacrifice."

**Note to editors:** Catholic Health Australia is Australia's largest grouping of not-for-profit health and aged care services, with more than 80 hospitals in both the public and private sectors, more than 25,000 aged care residential beds and numerous community care organisations. Between them they care for roughly one in ten Australians.