

Subject: Administrative Release of Information - [Ref FOI 3161] [SEC=OFFICIAL]
From: FOI <FOI@health.gov.au>
Date: 8/11/21, 2:38 pm
To: [REDACTED]
CC: FOI <FOI@health.gov.au>

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your Freedom of Information Request of 5 October 2021 to the Department of Health seeking access to the following documents:

- 1) *How much the Commonwealth Government has spent on purchasing PCR tests.*
- 2) *How many have been purchased and where were they sourced from.*
- 3) *How many PCR tests have been administered.*
- 4) *What is the average cost to the Commonwealth Government to get test results from laboratories.*

Administrative release of information

On the 27 October 2021 the department advised you that the information you were seeking could be provided to you administratively. On the 1 November 2021 you confirmed this approach and formally withdrew your Freedom of Information Request on the proviso that you would be provided with information administratively. Please find below your administrative response to Freedom of Information Request 3161.

1) How much the Commonwealth Government has spent on purchasing PCR tests.

In 2020 the Australian Government strategically procured a range of COVID-19 pathology testing supplies for the National Medical Stockpile (NMS) to supplement existing commercial supply and manage potential shortages. Supplies procured to support laboratory-based PCR COVID-19 testing included:

- BGI Group equipment and consumables at a cost of \$189.2 million (GST inclusive); and
- Thermo Fisher consumables at a cost of \$10.7 million (GST inclusive).

The supplies were acquired in the context of global shortages of testing supplies, and have helped ensure Australia has been able to maintain a high testing capacity.

2) How many have been purchased and where were they sourced from.

The Australian Government procured:

- BGI Group equipment and consumables providing capacity to conduct 4.86 million COVID 19 PCR tests from the Minderoo Foundation; and
- Thermo Fisher consumables with capacity to support 1.6 million COVID-19 PCR tests from Life Technologies Australia Pty Ltd.

3) How many PCR tests have been administered.

The Australian Government has deployed BGI Group equipment and consumables to laboratories that equate to the capacity to conduct over 3.1 million COVID-19 PCR tests. Thermo Fisher consumables, that equate to the capacity to conduct approximately 32,000 COVID-19 PCR tests have also been deployed to laboratories.

4) What is the average cost to the Commonwealth Government to get test results from laboratories.

The costs of the COVID-19 pathology testing supplies from the NMS was cost recovered from laboratories based on the procurement price of the supplies. The Australian Government does not pay laboratories to conduct COVID-19 tests using NMS supplies. The Australian Government does not receive the results of these confidential patient tests from the laboratories. COVID-19 test results are reported by pathology laboratories to state and territory health authorities under state and territory public health legislation.

Please do not hesitate to contact the department's FOI Unit at FOI@Health.gov.au if you have any questions regarding this e-mail.

Kind regards,

Sofie

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