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## **Omicron: Staff shortages continue to reap havoc in the hospitality industry**

- NSW hospitality venues forced to close due to staff being close contacts
- Rapid testing is a way to minimise the risk of spreading COVID in the workplace.
- Rapid Test & Track (RTT) provides employers with a technological solution to manage testing and vaccination status.

**20 December 2021:** Cancelled reservations and staff shortages are yet another deep blow to the hospitality industry, as many pubs and restaurants are forced to close their doors during the busiest time of the year.

“It is not just cancelled reservations that are the issue; we are struggling to find employees who aren’t considered close contacts and forced into isolation.” said Don Hodge, of Hodge Hotels who has a suite of hospitality venues, including Warners at the Bay and the Belmont Hotel in Newcastle.

“We have just implemented a new technology system called Rapid Test & Track to help us manage a rapid antigen testing regime to ensure that we are keeping both staff and patrons safe with minimal disruptions and without having to close venues due to staff being forced into isolation,” continued Hodge.

While increasing numbers of COVID positive cases keep many people at home in the lead up to Christmas and New Year’s Eve, rapid antigen testing is being heralded as an effective solution to contain the virus spread.

Approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), results are given within 20 minutes are highly accurate and cost-effective.

Medical director at RTT Scott Wilkinson says the benefits of rapid antigen testing are clear, significantly as the number of community-acquired cases rises and force closures.

“Rapid tests become statistically more accurate as the number of COVID cases rises in the community, and therefore their regular use, usually 2-3 times a week, approaches the accuracy of PCR testing, at a fraction of the cost and waiting times of PCR.” Says Wilkinson.

“As the number of community-acquired COVID-19 cases rise, the benefits of rapid antigen tests become even clearer. To avoid spread, families, workers and employers will need to identify positive COVID cases as early as possible and rapid testing allows this.”



NSW has recorded 2501 new COVID cases today, with researchers urging a rethink on mask-wearing and large group gatherings.

Alan Higgins, CEO of Rapid Test & Track, is working with hospitality venues throughout NSW and VIC to deliver his technology solution that manages the rapid antigen testing process.

“Our technology solution has been designed to manage the rapid antigen testing process for employers.

“Essentially, employees are asked to complete and submit their test results within the secure system, under the guidance of a telehealth professional. Rapid antigen tests are highly accurate when they are completed correctly. The business owner or person responsible for allocating shifts can access results and know the vaccination status of all employees.

“In the last week, we have received a large influx of hospitality venues implementing the rapid test and track system; it is essential for keeping the doors open and minimising risk.” Says Higgins.

From a legal perspective, Tim McDonald, Principal at McCabes Lawyers, says that employers have a responsibility to ensure that they are taking all reasonable steps to keep employees and customers safe, and that rapid antigen testing performed under supervised conditions could be key in avoiding legal issues.

“Employers have a legal responsibility to take all necessary and reasonable steps to keep employees and patrons safe.

“Following the government guidelines as well as using rapid antigen testing is a way to minimise the risk of spreading COVID in the workplace, and also minimising the risk of any legal action against the employer if the worse was to happen.”

For more information about Rapid Test & Track, visit <https://rapidtestandtrack.com.au/> or contact [sales@rtt.co](mailto:sales@rtt.co).

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