

Right to Information Decision – Public Disclosure Log

Right to Information No.: RTI202021-011

Information Requested

The information requested:

... provide one document that shows and provides scientific factual evidence that the testing procedure being used in Australia and Tasmania 100% positively identifies Covid-19, also known as SARS-CoV-2 (not any other type of Coronavirus) in a living human, beyond any reasonable doubt.

Decision

The applicant was previously advised:

Tasmania's response to COVID-19 is guided by the medical and research expertise of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee as the key decision-making committee for health emergencies. It is comprised of all state and territory Chief Health Officers and is chaired by the Australian Chief Medical Officer. Tasmania is represented by our Director, Public Health Services on this group. This clinical advice is constantly being updated as additional information is discovered about the virus.

The issues you raise are under active investigation by this (and other) medical bodies. You can keep up to date with the latest Australian clinical statements on COVID-19 at:

<https://www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/australianhealth-protection-principal-committee-ahppc>

The applicant requested clarification on the above and was advised:

- Tasmanian laboratories do not isolate SARS CoV-2 virus, but use a testing process called Nucleic acid testing (NAT)
- This is a real time polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) method, the method of choice for detection of SARS-CoV-2 during the acute illness.
- These tests are highly specific, using primers and probes designed only to detect SARS CoV-2
- All positive results are confirmed with a second set of primers and probes, directed at a different part of the SARS CoV-2 genome
- All detected Tasmanian SARS CoV-2 are sequenced, further confirming their identification, and leaving no room for doubt as to the virus identified.

In addition:

The laboratory is a registered with the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA). Also, the laboratory is compliant with the National Pathology Accreditation Advisory Council (NPAAC) as a human diagnostic laboratory where the document system is aligned around policies and procedures for the management of COVID-19 testing within the laboratory. There is no sole document in the laboratory that provides the information requested. As previously advised, all positive tests undergo a DNA sequencing process which confirms that the virus detected in our assay is SARS CoV-2.