Thursday, 27 May 2021

# Confirmed COVID-19 Case Visited Cohuna

The Victorian Department of Health (DoH) confirmed on Wednesday that a person who had since tested positive for COVID-19 had visited the town of Cohuna on Saturday 22nd May.  The person attended the Cohuna Football & Netball Club, Cohuna Recreation Reserve on Island Road between midday and 5pm.  They watched a number of netball games, visited the canteen (indoors) and used the outdoor public toilets.

Following advice late Tuesday night from the Bendigo Health Public Health Unit of the possible case, Northern District Community Health (NDCH) swung into action to set up a COVID Swabbing Clinic.  With support from Cohuna District Hospital, Gannawarra Shire Council, Kerang District Health, Bendigo Health, and local Police, the first day of swabbing saw over 260 locals get tested.

Late Wednesday afternoon, the Victorian DoH listed the exposure at Cohuna at Tier 2, meaning that anybody who had visited the Cohuna Recreation Reserve on the afternoon of 22nd May should get urgently tested and isolate until they get a negative result.

Starting Thursday 27th May, NDCH will work with Bendigo Health clinicians and staff to continue the swabbing from the Cohuna NDCH site at 33 King Edward Street, Cohuna.

NDCH CEO Mandy Hutchinson said the response of the community and local services has been amazing.  "This is how we do things in rural areas," she said.  "Everyone pulls together and helps each other out.  Local services, community groups and individuals have really stepped up to keep each other safe.  I'm so proud of our community."

Ms. Hutchinson said, in particular, the wonderful leadership of the Cohuna Kangas Football Netball Club, led by their Board Chairman Rick Easton, has been instrumental in getting people moving and showing up for testing.  "We're all in this together," Mr Easton said.  "The community-mindedness of country football/netball clubs means we're up for challenges when they arise.  It's important everyone who was at the ground on the weekend gets tested and isolates until they get their results back."

"The best protection we have as we manage COVID-19, even at our local level, is to follow the advice of the Department of Health," Cohuna District Hospital CEO, Bernadette Loughnane said.  "This is the first known exposure of COVID-19 in the Cohuna community, we continue to partner with our local health services to ensure our community and our staff are safe."

Anybody needing testing at Cohuna can drop in for a swab from 9am on Thursday and Friday this week with no appointment necessary.  People are reminded to bring their Medicare card with them.  Testing is free.  "Health services, local government and police will continue liaising and planning the next steps," Ms. Hutchinson said.  "Please keep an eye on our social media and the website.  As soon as we know more details we will let everyone know."

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Media Enquiries:     Mandy Hutchinson, NDCH CEO
(03) 5451 0200
mandy.hutchinson@ndch.org.au