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National Cabinet must act and make rapid antigen tests widely accessible and free for low income and social security recipients

Australia's peak Catholic social services organisation is calling on Australia's political leaders at today's National Cabinet meeting to make Rapid antigen tests (RATs) free for low income earners and social security recipients.

Francis Sullivan, Chair of Catholic Social Services Australia, said today that the Federal Government must make the RATs available to the very people most in danger of contracting the disease.

"There are some three million people in Australia struggling to survive on below poverty line incomes. These people are the least able to afford the outrageous prices, often up to \$70 for a kit, some outlets are charging," Mr Sullivan said.

"The Federal Government has failed to ensure there are enough tests on the shelves to stop price gouging so it is only reasonable that it provide free tests for those that can least afford them including the homeless, people living with disabilities, First Nations people and others on survival incomes.

"Today the National Cabinet has a choice to show some compassion, act in the interests of people most in need and to make RATs free for low income earners and people living on social security benefits.

"It is the Government's responsibility to ensure everyone has access to testing, to vaccinations and to booster shots. But this is not happening.

"For months social services providers across Australia have been calling for the Federal Government to increase on the ground services to people most in need and those with the lowest vaccination rates.

"The facts are almost four times as many people living on the lowest incomes have died of COVID-19 compared to people in the highest income groups.

"The National Cabinet can today make a decision to help protect low income earners and the disadvantaged by making Rapid antigen tests free for those most in need," Mr Sullivan said.

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