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Screenings for FIFO workers

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■ Peter de Kruijff

Fly-in, fly-out workers from across WA will be tested for COVID-19 in a major expansion of the community testing regime.

The Department of Health alongside Curtin University and the Harry Perkins Institute is taking its DETECT project — to test asymptomatic teachers and students in schools — to most resources companies in WA.

Premier Mark McGowan said nearly 30,000 tests would be done as part of the project.

“Testing workers in this way will help provide greater certainty around possible undetected community transmission,” he said.

“Our resources sector is going to great lengths to keep its workforce safe and ensure work can continue.”

Chamber of Minerals and Energy chief executive Paul Everingham said its members, which are responsible for 98 per cent of WA’s resources production, would all be taking part.

Chevron, Woodside, Rio Tinto, BHP, Roy Hill, Regis Resources, Perenti Group, Mineral Resources, Minara Resources, Citic Pacific Mining and AngloGold Ashanti Australia are just some of the participating companies.

Mr Everingham said testing would act as an additional layer of industry measures to further protect its workforce and communities from COVID-19.

“The study will position us as a world leader in identifying prevalence in essential cohorts, validating testing techniques and informing broader academic research and provide valuable insight into COVID-19,” he said.

Chevron Australia managing director Al Williams said the screening was an important step.

“We can help the community better understand, manage and mitigate the further spread of the virus,” he said.

Mr Williams said the virus has had a big impact on all the community, with the WA Government doing a good job.

“Because of that leadership being extended to the resources industry we’ve been able to maintain essential supplies of natural gas to WA homes, hospitals, schools and businesses,” he said. “Chevron’s priorities has and continues to be the health and safety of our employees, their families, our contractors and the community.”