

# Business confidence hit by RATs impasse

Businesses have expressed frustration over the Government's red-light settings and the lack of access to rapid antigen tests.

A survey of 1500 Auckland businesses conducted by the Auckland Business Chamber showed that 89 per cent of businesses expect the economic environment will be the same or worse over the next six months. Just 11 per cent of thought the business climate would improve.

"Business confidence has been shaken," said Auckland Business Chamber CEO Michael Barnett.

Of the businesses surveyed, 86 per cent said they are struggling with the red-light system.

Barnett said there was particular concern over the isolation and work-from-home mandates, which are proving difficult and confusing to comply with.

He warned that the risk this posed to business operations could end up impacting customer service and supply.

"If you're in manufacturing, operations and a wide range of



**Michael Barnett**

customer-facing sectors, work from home is not feasible," Barnett said.

"The enabler to keep these critical functions and jobs secured are rapid antigen tests." He said an overwhelming number of the businesses surveyed would be using these tests if they could get their hands on them.

"If they were available, 83 per cent of businesses would be using them and have some certainty that they could function efficiently and have their workers on-site, in jobs and able to be paid," Barnett said.

"The Government needs to work with the private sector to ensure the red light does not mean stop. It should be enabling business and providing the full range of tools, including testing kits, to keep businesses and jobs operating as close to normal as spelt out under the red-light protection framework."