Flutracking Report on the Omicron Variant to 27/3/22

Key findings

- **The rate of increase of cough and fever rates in Australia is slowing down, suggesting the Omicron subvariant BA. 2 wave may be close to peaking (Figure 1).**
- **Cough and fever rates are increasing rapidly among First Nations participants, and are now at pre-pandemic levels.**
- **Self-reported RAT testing among Flutracking participants continues to increase among all age groups, with approximately 5.4 RATs performed per PCR in the week ending 27 March 2022 (Figures 2, 3 and 4.)**
- **Percent positivity (self-reported) for PCRs has stabilised, but increased for RATs (18.3% and 7.9% respectively for week ending 27 March 2022) (Figure 5). Among participants with cough and fever, the percent positivity for PCR and RAT was 59.7% and 58.5% respectively (weekly report).**
- **While rarer in Omicron, symptoms such as change in taste or smell, fever, or SOB better discriminate a positive vs negative PCR or RAT result in Flutracking participants compared to milder symptoms (Table 1).**

FluTracking is a weekly online survey of approximately 50,000 participants across Australia. This report should be read in the context of the standard weekly Flutracking report at https://info.flutracking.net/reports-2/australia-reports/

Figure 1. Percentage of Flutracking participants nationally with fever and cough, 2019 to current.

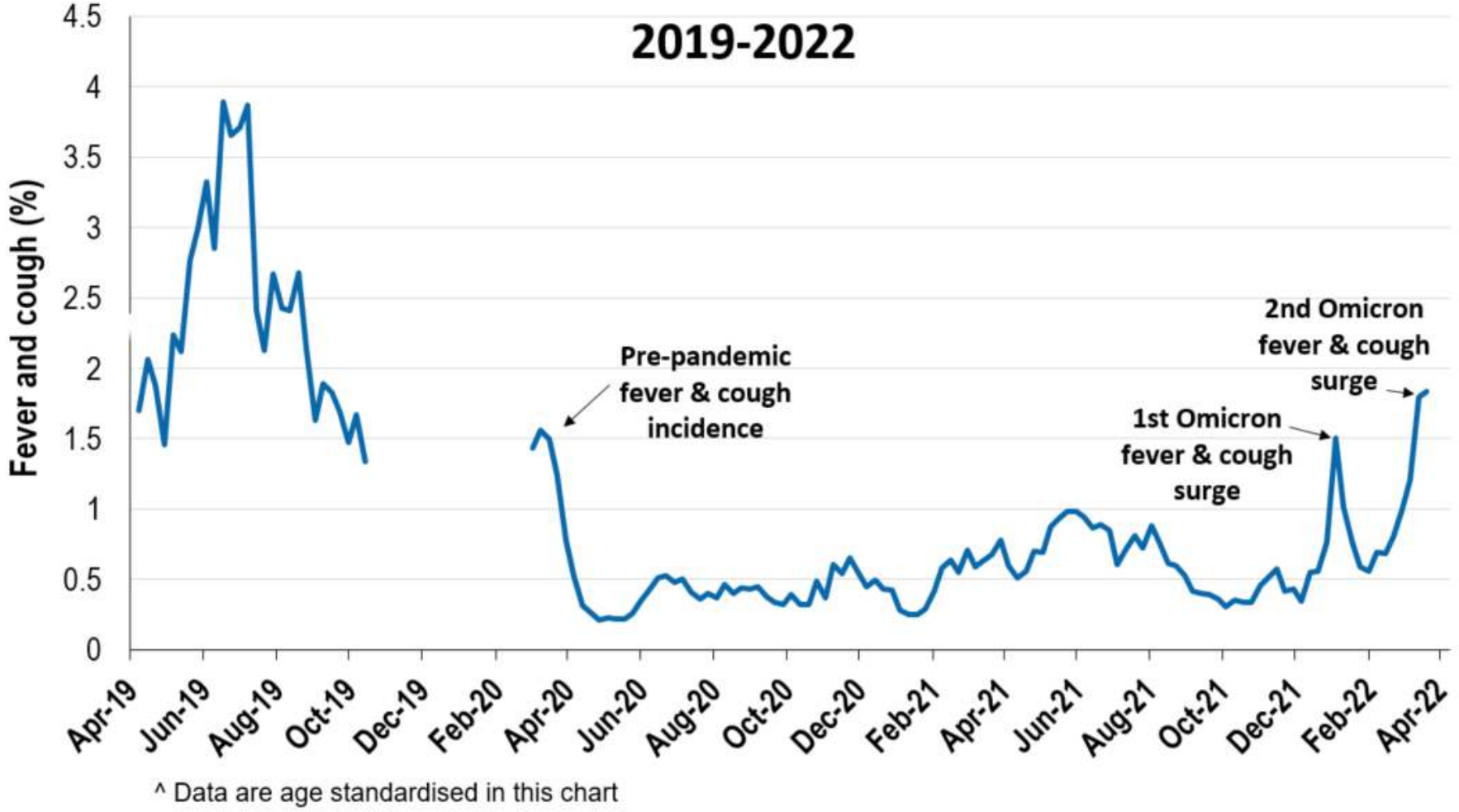


Figure 2. Self-reported weekly testing for PCR vs RAT, Australia, week ending 14 November 2021- week ending 27 March 2022. (Participant count approximately 45-60,000 participants per week).

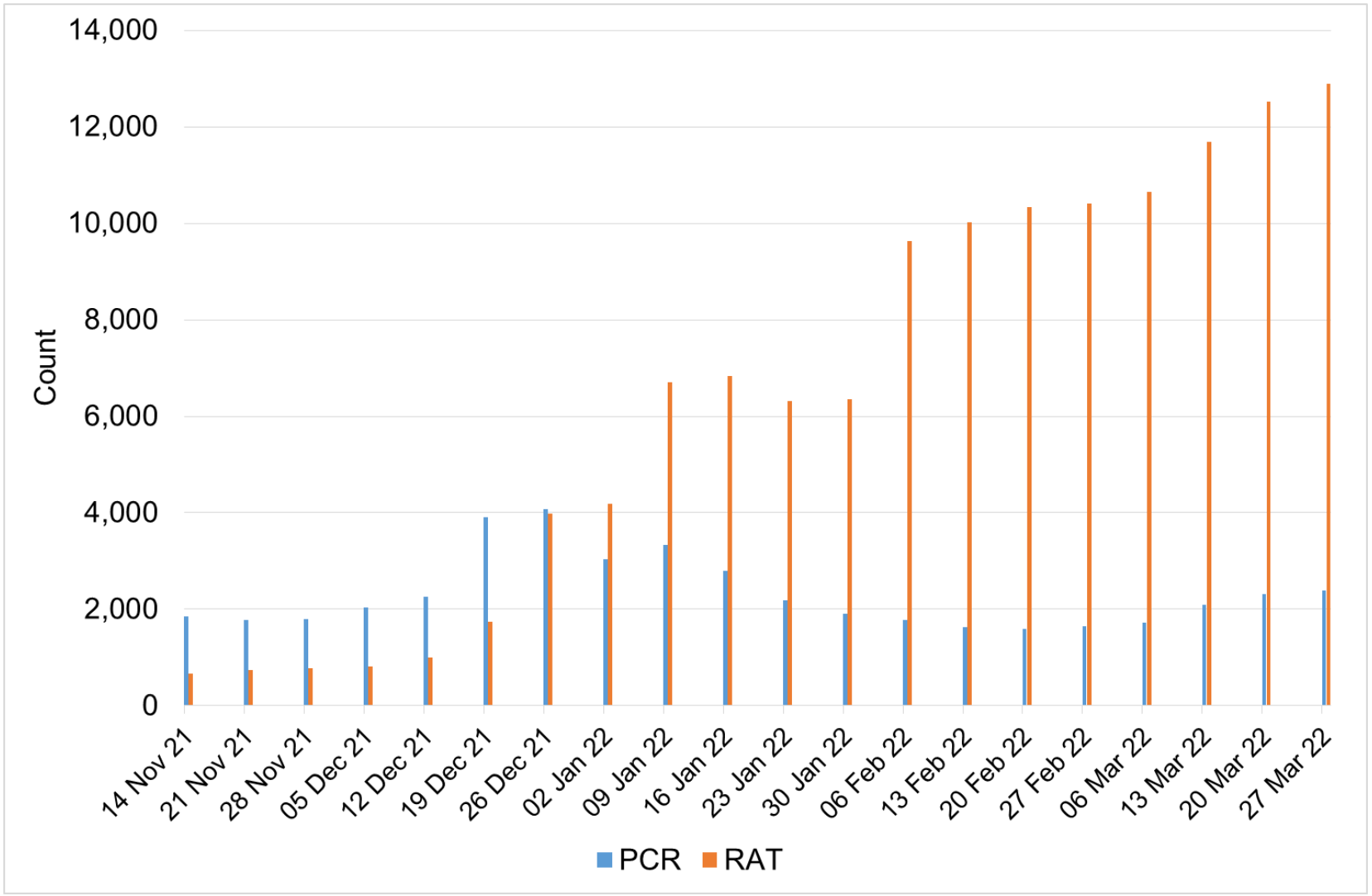
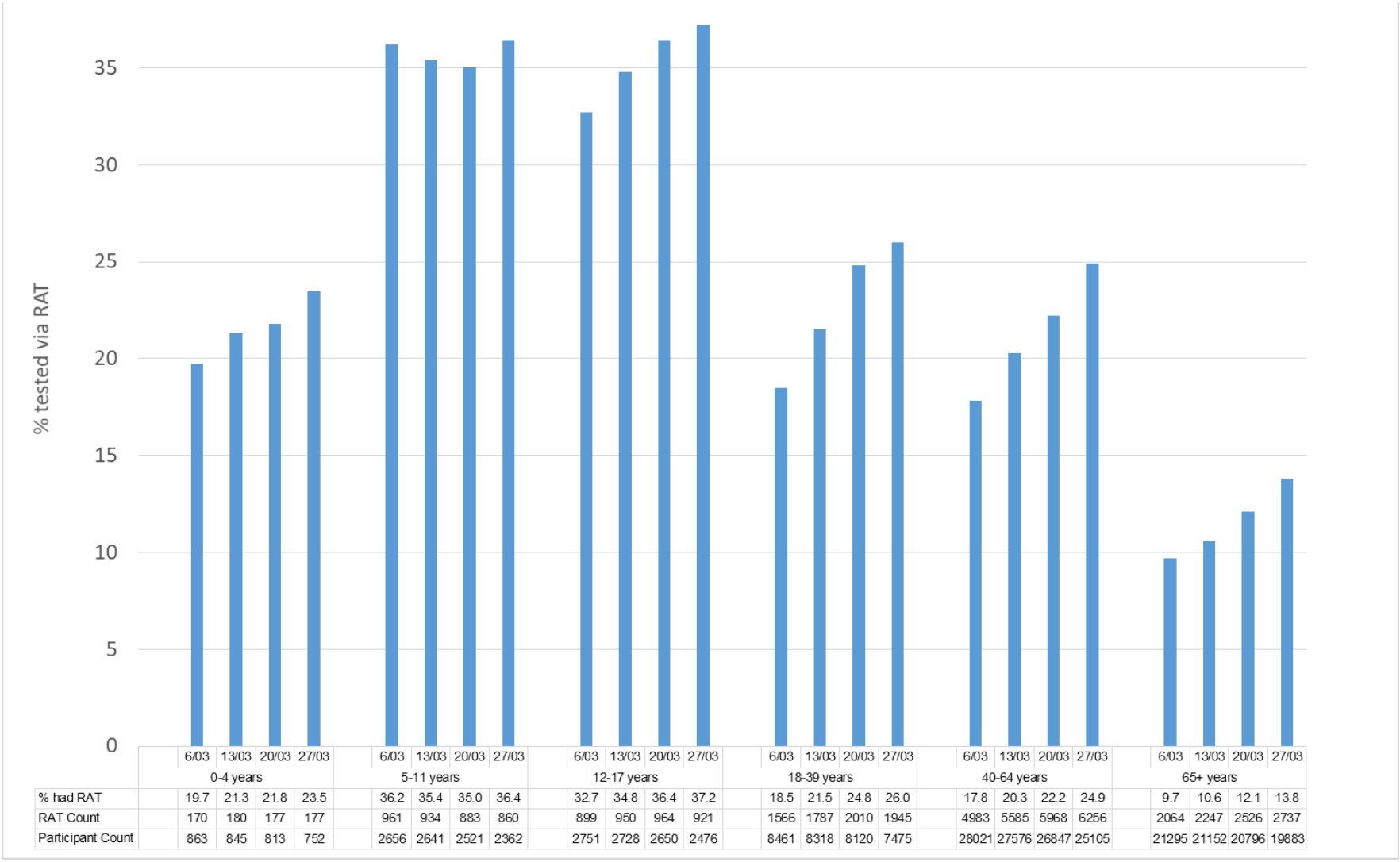

14,000
12,000
10,000
8,000
6,000
4,000
2,000
0
Count
14 Nov 21
21 Nov 21
28 Nov 21
05 Dec 21
12 Dec 21
19 Dec 21
26 Dec 21
02 Jan 22
09 Jan 22
16 Jan 22
23 Jan 22
30 Jan 22
06 Feb 22
13 Feb 22
20 Feb 22
27 Feb 22
06 Mar 22
13 Mar 22
20 Mar 22
27 Mar 22
PCR
RAT

Figure 3. Self-reported weekly testing for RAT, by age group, Australia, weeks ending 20 February – 27 March 2022.



	0-4 years				5-11 years				12-17 years				18-39 years				40-64 years				65+ years			
	6/03	13/03	20/03	27/03	6/03	13/03	20/03	27/03	6/03	13/03	20/03	27/03	6/03	13/03	20/03	27/03	6/03	13/03	20/03	27/03	6/03	13/03	20/03	27/03
% had RAT	19.7	21.3	21.8	23.5	36.2	35.4	35.0	36.4	32.7	34.8	36.4	37.2	18.5	21.5	24.8	26.0	17.8	20.3	22.2	24.9	9.7	10.6	12.1	13.8
RAT Count	170	180	177	177	961	934	883	860	899	950	964	921	1566	1787	2010	1945	4983	5585	5968	6256	2064	2247	2526	2737
Participant Count	863	845	813	752	2656	2641	2521	2362	2751	2728	2650	2476	8461	8318	8120	7475	28021	27576	26847	25105	21295	21152	20796	19883

Figure 4. Weekly % of participants who responded to the survey and reported having a RAT, PCR or both in the survey week, Australia, week ending 14 November 2021 – 27 March 2022.

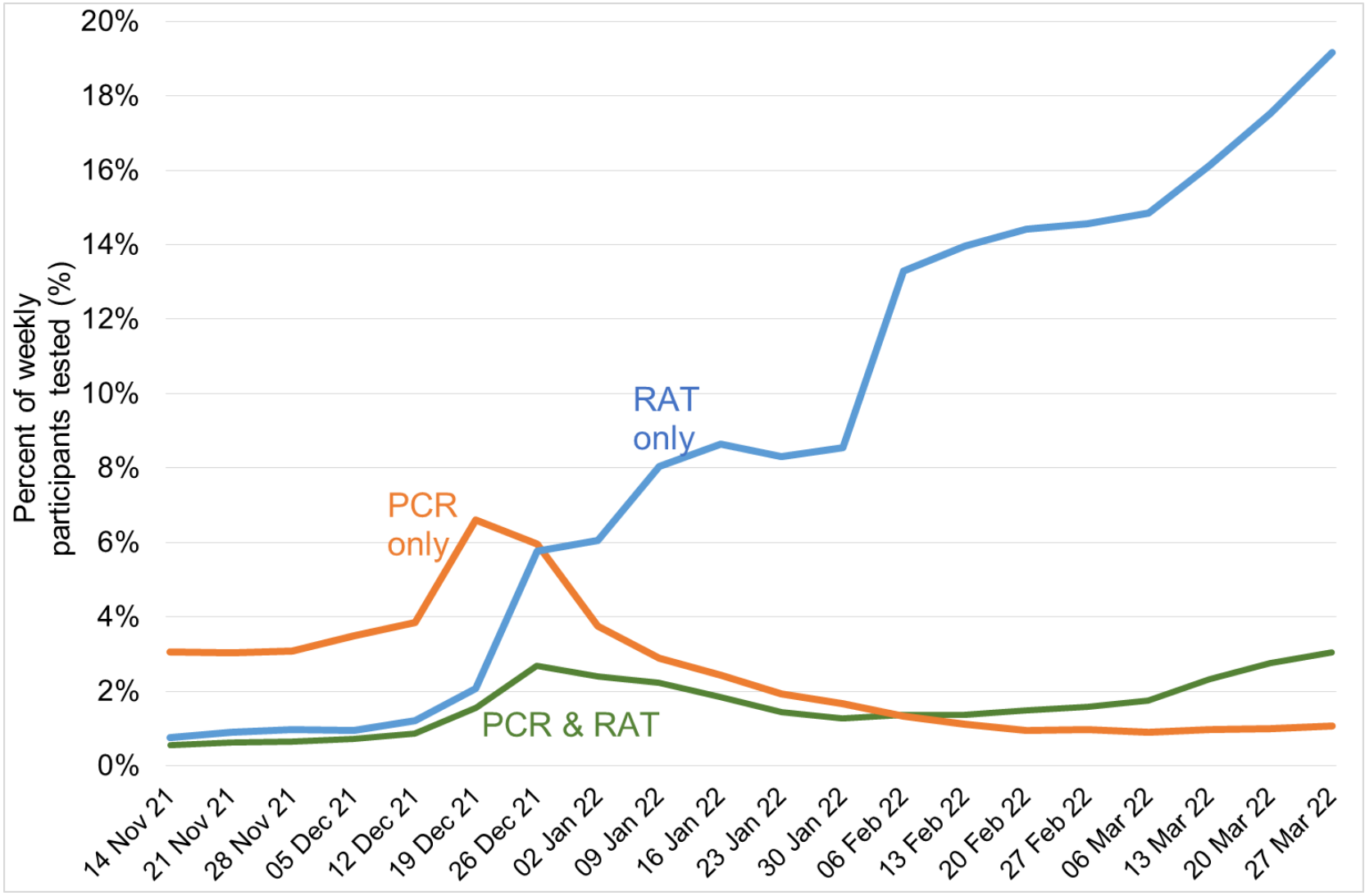


Figure 5. Test percent positivity, by test type, Australia, week ending 14 November 2021- 27 March 2022.

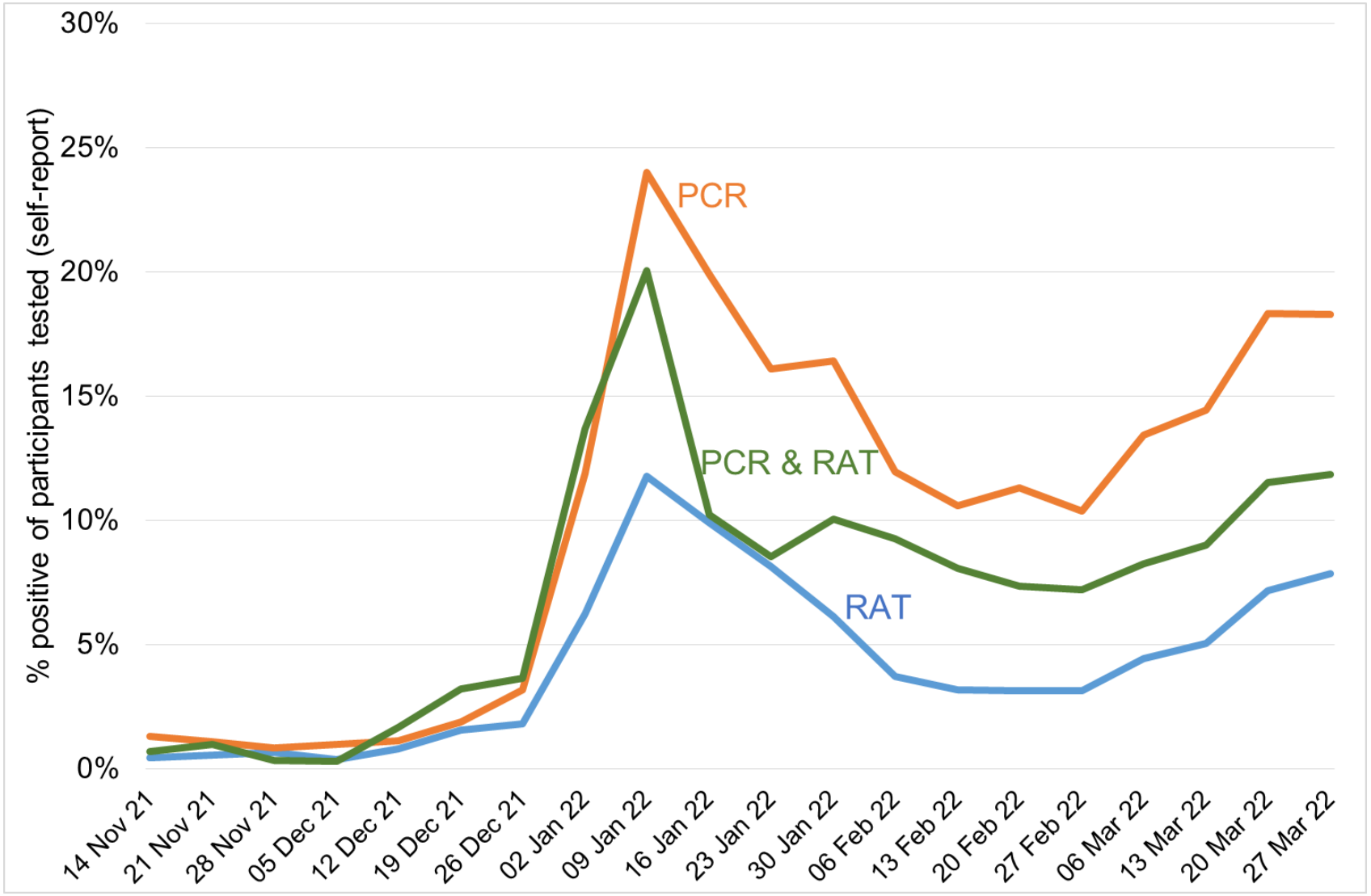


Table 1. Percentage of participants with symptoms among those who reported a positive or negative result among those tested via RAT or PCR, week ending 27 March 2022

	Rapid Antigen Test				PCR			
Symptom	**Positive RAT N=1,013**		**Negative RAT N=11,854**		**Positive PCR N=436**		**Negative PCR N=1,904**	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Change in taste/smell	240	23.7	173	1.5	97	22.2	58	3.0
Fever	528	52.1	540	4.6	225	51.6	211	11.1
Cough	808	79.8	1984	16.7	358	82.1	542	28.5
Shortness of breath	213	21.0	557	4.7	109	25.0	193	10.1
Runny nose	799	78.9	2600	21.9	348	79.8	650	34.1
Sore throat	767	75.7	2573	21.7	351	80.5	711	37.3
Headache	671	66.2	2445	20.6	299	68.6	610	32.0
At least one of above symptoms	968	95.6	4844	40.9	422	96.8	1073	56.4

Methodological Notes

1) data collection on RATs was available for surveys from 12 November 2021 onward. The first full week of data collection for RATs was the survey week ending Sunday 14 November for those who complete their survey within 7 days of receiving their survey email, noting that participants can complete surveys for the current week, and the prior 4 weeks.

2) A participant can only report a maximum or 1 RAT + 1 PCR test per survey week, and 1 RAT positive + 1 PCR positive test per survey week.