



Media Release

Protection for Thursday Island health workers as COVID outbreak worsens in nearby PNG

10 April 2021: Much needed COVID ventilation hoods have landed on remote Thursday Island, off Cape York, to protect local health workers should they need to treat patients confirmed or suspected of having COVID-19.

Three of the Australian-made McMonty Medihoods have been funded by the RDAQ Foundation and Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) to assist Thursday Island Hospital, considering the growing COVID outbreak in nearby Papua New Guinea.

It follows the successful installation of 17 Medihoods at hospitals across the Darling Downs Health region over the past six months.

The McMonty Medihoods are easy to install, with a transparent plastic cover that fits quickly above the head and torso area of a suspected or confirmed COVID patient in a hospital bed. The cover acts as a physical barrier between the patient and health workers, with a pump sucking air from within the hood to a hospital-grade air filter behind the patient's bed.

The Medihoods provide an additional layer of protective equipment for health staff to minimise the spread of the virus.

RDAQ Foundation Chair, Dr Dan Halliday, said: "Given the potential for coronavirus to spread to Thursday Island from PNG, the Medihoods will be critical tools in helping to protect health professionals and other patients at Thursday Island Hospital. The RDAQ Foundation is pleased to be funding the hoods, and we are very grateful to RDAA for coming on board with us as co-funders of this important project."

"With the recent clusters in Queensland which have been traced back to health staff, providing additional layers of protection equipment is essential to protect not just the health professionals treating COVID patients, but also to the broader community.

RDAA President, Dr John Hall, said: "The proximity of Thursday Island to PNG means there is greater potential for coronavirus to spread to the Island. Having the Medihoods available at Thursday Island Hospital will mean an extra layer of safety for health professionals and other patients should someone present there with COVID-like symptoms. RDAA is very pleased to be supporting this project with the RDAQ Foundation."

The hoods were designed and developed by a University of Melbourne engineering team led by Professor Jason Monty (Head of Mechanical Engineering) in collaboration with Intensive Care specialist Associate Professor Forbes McGain from Western Health (Melbourne).

Clinical trials of the hoods in Intensive Care Units (ICUs) at Western Health's Footscray and Sunshine Hospitals (where more than 60 COVID ICU patients have been treated) have been promising.

The following representatives are available for interview:

Dr Dan Halliday - Chair - RDAQ Foundation – photo [here](#).

Dr John Hall - President - RDAA – photo [here](#).

Media contacts

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Multimedia

A video demonstrating the McMonty Medihood is available [by clicking here](#).

To watch a video of the iterative design process for the hood [click here](#).
(please credit Cesar Nicolas, University of Melbourne).

A high-resolution photo of the McMonty Medihood in use (with Associate Professor Forbes McGain at left) is available by [clicking here](#) (please credit Penny Stephens / Western Health).

Anyone wishing to donate to RDAQ Foundation, to fund innovative health initiatives in rural and remote communities, is encouraged to do so by visiting www.ruraldoctorsfoundation.org.au
Donations are tax deductible.