



Friday 16 October 2020

## **New COVID-19 video campaign celebrates how frontline anaesthetists are “always ready”**

More than 50 anaesthetists across Australia and New Zealand have participated in a new video campaign that highlights how they are ‘always ready’ on the medical frontline.

To mark National Anaesthesia Day, they produced 90-second videos explaining why they are always ready. The slogan referred to the challenging months that many of them have experienced as frontline medical specialists during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Anaesthetists are experts in managing patients’ airways and the use of ventilators for seriously ill COVID-19 patients. They are also highly qualified to manage emergencies.

National Anaesthesia Day (16 October) is an initiative of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA). It marks the day in 1846 when surgery was revolutionised by showing that the patient’s pain could be controlled by the use of ether.

This made surgery safer, and it became a viable option for previously untreatable conditions. Out of this development came a need for specialist doctors focussed on keeping the patient alive during surgery, leaving the surgeon free to focus on carrying out the surgical procedure.

On this day each year, hospitals in Australia and New Zealand hold displays and activities to explain anaesthesia. COVID-19 has forced a rethink this year, but has not stopped the event. “We wanted to do something that highlighted how anaesthetists are ‘always ready’ for any emergency, including COVID-19,” ANZCA President Dr Vanessa Beavis explained.

“National Anaesthesia Day is a chance for us to give patients and the wider community a better understanding of the important role anaesthetists play after their 14 years of medical specialist training.

“Some hospital anaesthesia departments couldn’t help but inject a bit of humour into their submissions including the team at the [Royal Brisbane Women’s Hospital](#). Their adaptation of the iconic Australian “Matter of fact I’ve got it now” Victoria Bitter commercial was not only a bit different but would also give us a much-needed lift and something to smile about after the last few months.”

“This year’s theme “Anaesthetists: Always Ready” builds on the public awareness of specialty as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the role our doctors play in treating patients with the coronavirus.”

Anaesthetists have worked with state and national governments to develop appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) guidelines and on issues such as scaling back elective surgery.

A selection of the videos can be found on ANZCA’s YouTube channel (insert link) and on twitter @ANZCA and Facebook @ANZCA1992.

**For more information or to request interviews please contact ANZCA Media Manager  
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