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## Anaesthetists call for mandatory vaccinations of frontline healthcare workers

The Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) supports calls for mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations of all frontline healthcare workers in public and private hospitals.

ANZCA President Dr Vanessa Beavis said the surge in COVID-19 case infections in Australia and in New Zealand highlighted the urgency of ensuring that all frontline healthworkers, including support staff, are vaccinated.

“We know just how fast the Delta variant of the virus can spread so it really is crucial that hospitals and health departments stress the importance of vaccinations for the safety of hospital healthcare staff, not just doctors, nurses and other clinicians, but for all staff including administrative, cleaning employees and contractors as a priority,” she said.

“Anaesthetists are experiencing at first hand the impact of COVID-19 in hospitals where they are applying their intubation skills to ventilate patients in operating theatres, ward emergencies and ICUs”.

“The evidence is clear – double dose vaccination protects against severe COVID-19 symptoms and hospitalisation.”

Dr Beavis said with scientific modelling predicting a further surge in COVID-19 case infections and hospitalisations in coming weeks, frontline healthcare workers faced even more challenging times with longer hours and additional critical care workloads.

“Ensuring that all frontline staff are vaccinated will reassure hospital staff and their families that they will be safe at work performing their critically important functions.” she said.

We applaud all jurisdictions that have mandated vaccines for healthcare workers in both public and private hospitals under a public health order and urge the authorities to extend this across all of Australia and New Zealand.

Dr Beavis said boosting the community COVID-19 vaccination rate was essential and hospitals and healthcare facilities should play their role by ensuring that all staff, including clinicians, nurses, cleaners and administrative staff were vaccinated.

ANZCA is one of the largest specialist medical colleges in Australia and New Zealand, and the region's foremost authority on anaesthesia, pain medicine and perioperative medicine. It is the professional membership organisation for more than 7500 specialist anaesthetists and 500 specialist pain medicine physicians.