

# National Action on Aerosol Transmission of COVID-19

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***AUSTRALIA'S HEALTHCARE WORKERS CALL FOR URGENT  
COORDINATED NATIONAL ACTION ON AEROSOL  
TRANSMISSION OF COVID-19***

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**AUSTRALIA'S HEALTHCARE WORKERS CALL FOR URGENT COORDINATED NATIONAL ACTION ON AEROSOL TRANSMISSION OF COVID-19**

Over a year into the pandemic, **Australia's healthcare workers remain unprotected from COVID-19**. Hospital patients remain vulnerable to infection. Workers and guests in hotel quarantine are regularly becoming infected. **Escapes from hotel quarantine into the community have become an everyday occurrence in Australia**

The jury has now returned its verdict: **COVID-19 is transmitted through the airborne (or aerosol) route**. This means it can linger in the air for hours like cigarette smoke.

Present protections are based predominantly on short range droplet/contact transmission. This means **present protections are inadequate**, as the evidence from mass healthcare worker infections in Melbourne and around the world shows.

Frustrated by the lack of government action to tackle this extreme threat, Australia's healthcare workers now call on Federal and State governments to **recognise the reality of airborne transmission of COVID-19** and to **act urgently** on it.

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***Amongst other things, over four hundred signatories on this open letter to ministers and peak government bodies are calling for:***

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- Public health messaging about the airborne spread of COVID-19
- A precautionary approach to healthcare worker safety
- Higher standard airborne PPE
- Urgent attention to indoor air quality and ventilation systems in hospitals, quarantine facilities and other public buildings
- Multi-disciplinary team, including occupational health and hygiene and other experts, to be involved in guideline-setting and implementation of infection control measures.

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## Quotes

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**Co-author, Dr David Berger, a rural GP emergency doctor, said:** *"This virus is a national security threat, masquerading as an infectious disease. The new, highly transmissible strains, such as B117, make the need to recognise and act on airborne transmission even more urgent."*

**Co-author, Dr Andrew Miller, President of AMA WA, said:** *"Until we recognise the reality of airborne transmission and act on it, fast, we will continue to see escapes from hotel quarantine and our hospitals and healthcare workers will remain vulnerable, which means we all remain vulnerable."*

**Co-author, Anna Davidson, Director, Port Stephens GP Super Clinic said:** *"The general public understands that healthcare workers deserve the best protection. They will be surprised that they have to beg for it. No other industry does this."*

**Co-author, David Metcalf, said:** *"Outbreak prevention is vastly cheaper than the 'cure' of chasing down outbreaks with costly interventions, or risking catastrophe from loss of control. Australia cannot afford to NOT invest in airborne transmission preventions."*

**Reviewer and Signatory, Kate Cole, said:** *"Every worker in Australia deserves a safe workplace. Until we get workplace safety experts like occupational hygienists involved who understand the significance of airborne transmission and the need to upgrade personal protective equipment and focus on ventilation, healthcare workers are at risk."*

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