



a healthier world through  
sonographer expertise

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Sonographer shortage puts Australians' health at risk**

The Australasian Sonographers Association (ASA) is calling on a whole of sector approach to resolve Australia's sonographer shortage, at the conclusion of Medical Ultrasound Awareness Month.

"This Medical Ultrasound Awareness Month, we're highlighting the fact that Australia doesn't have enough qualified sonographers to meet demand, putting Australians at risk," ASA Chief Executive Officer, Tony Coles said.

"Sonographers are a vital part of Australia's health system, carrying out the vast majority of the nearly 12 million Medicare-funded ultrasound examinations in the 2022-2023 financial year.

"Ultrasound is the most frequently used diagnostic imaging service in Australia, representing 42% of all services used in the past 12 months and we're expecting this to increase as Australia's population continues to grow," Dr Coles said.

Despite the growing demand for ultrasound services, more than 80% of respondents to the ASA's survey of major diagnostic imaging employers advised they expected the sonographer workforce shortage to increase.

"If we don't have sufficient sonographers working in our health system, patients' opportunities for a timely ultrasound reduce, putting their health outcomes and the functioning of our health system at risk," Dr Coles said.

"If patients can't access timely ultrasound services, that might mean a problem with a mother's placenta isn't identified, risking her pregnancy and the health of her baby.

"A delayed ultrasound might mean an initial diagnosis of stomach cancer is postponed, setting back treatment to help the patient fight the disease.

"While we're celebrating our sonographers during Medical Ultrasound Awareness Month, we're also sending a message to our partners in Government and the diagnostic imaging sector that we need to work together to get the sonographer workforce back on track.

"Solutions such as a targeted scholarship program and supported placements for sonographers would mirror the investment made in other critical health workforces and ensure every Australian can access an ultrasound whenever they need one," Dr Coles said.

The Australasian Sonographers Association (ASA) is the professional organisation for Australasian sonographers, the experts in ultrasound. The ASA has over 7,000 members, equating to more than 75% of Australasia's sonographers.

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