



the peak body and leading voice
for sonographers

ASA statement: The Australian Government response to PPE access

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is currently a worldwide shortage of PPE and this means access to this equipment is difficult. On 18 March 2020, as part of a coalition of leading imaging bodies in Australia and New Zealand, the ASA called on Australian and New Zealand Governments to ensure all private and public clinical radiology departments and practices have access to PPE throughout the pandemic, with a letter sent to the Health Ministers of both the Australian and New Zealand government.

The Australian government has advised that their highest priority is to ensure access to masks and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for front line acute health service and primary care staff.

This includes:

- Public hospitals (supporting the states and territories), general practices, community pharmacies, and other settings where people are most likely to be presenting with COVID-19
- Residential aged care facilities in the event of an outbreak.

The hospital sector is currently very short of PPE, and ICU Departments are only using masks when they should have those body suits and face masks and as such the Australian government has advised that it is unable to directly supply private imaging and radiation oncology practices with PPE at this time, however significant stocks of additional face masks have been secured and are due to arrive over the coming months. The Department of Health is working domestically and internationally to ensure supply of masks and other PPE.

Therefore, practices are encouraged to source PPE through their usual channels and where possible minimise the use of PPE on a case-by-case basis. Sonographers concerned about their safety should raise their concerns with their manager.

The ASA will continue to monitor the situation of supply of PPE in New Zealand.

The coalition of leading imaging bodies will continue working closely with governments to monitor the availability of PPE and stress the role our members will play to deliver critical medical services throughout the pandemic.