# ASA statement: Impact of the coronavirus on sonographers and their employers

The coronavirus pandemic is having a significant impact on sonographers’ and their employers across Australia and New Zealand, with the number of ultrasound referrals decreasing.

To slow the spread of the coronavirus and ensure that our health systems have the best chance to respond to the impact of COVID-19, Australian and New Zealand governments have directed that non-essential health services should be deferred to after the pandemic has passed. This includes delaying non-essential ultrasound examinations and many health services that would require an ultrasound scan.

As a result, many sonographers are being asked to consume annual or long service leave entitlements, having reduced hours or facing unemployment.



## What is the ASA doing?

### Employment and redeployment opportunities

As it is estimated that 30% of the current frontline health workforce will be unable to work due to falling ill themselves or having to take care of an ill family member, there will be several roles that need to be backfilled. The ASA has approached all state, territory and federal governments, advising them that sonographers have a range of medical skills that could be redeployed to support increased frontline services. This includes providing roles in basic care, assisting doctors, navigating the health system and wound care.

With approximately 30% of sonographers maintaining registration as a medical radiation practitioner, they may also be called upon to support the radiography workforce where radiographers are absent due to illness or other reasons.

Various governments have begun establishing registers of health professionals for deployment in their scope of practice or in modified scopes of practice where needed. The Expressions of interest Workforce Redeployment page (linked by using the button above) on the ASA website provides the latest local information on opportunities for sonographers.

### HR information for sonographer employees and employers

Medical Imaging Practices and all their employees, including sonographers, are facing challenging circumstances. We support the Fairwork statements around encouraging employees and employers to work together to find the most beneficial and workable solutions that suit their individual workplace and situation. Working together, there are a variety of options to help business and employment continuity through this time.

The ASA will continue to ensure that sonographers and their employers are across the most current information. This available on the ASA website Expressions of interest Workforce Redeployment page under “Human Resources Support”

### Financial assistance

Unfortunately, some sonographers will become redundant at this time and could struggle to secure other work. If this happens, it is important to access the financial assistance and initiatives that Australian and New Zealand governments have made available.

If you need to access this assistance, the most current information is available on the ASA website Expressions of interest Workforce Redeployment page under “Financial Assistance”

The ASA membership fees will be coming up soon and we will be moving to monthly payments which will help relieve some of the financial burden. We will be looking at the fee structure as well insurance payment options and will keep you updated on this. We understand that many of you may be facing financial hardship and if this is the case with membership renewals / insurance coming up please contact the office at memberservices@sonographers.org