



**22 April 2020**

Dear Colleagues,

Firstly, I'd like to thank you all for your work over the past almost three months since we started our COVID-19 response. There has been an enormous amount of work happening at all levels of the organisation to prepare us for the unknown. We have seen teamwork and innovation right across the HHS. Our efforts, and the social distancing and social distancing restrictions, have made a huge difference. We only need to look at the high number of cases and deaths in other countries to see differently things could be in Australia.

The good news is, we are now able to scale back some of our initial response to focus on managing our next phase. Today we will wind up our Caboolture Hospital fever clinic and Brighton Health Campus Community Assessment Clinic. Thank you to the staff involved in these clinics. There are several [GP respiratory clinics](#) which have stood up in the area and we are seeing a significant decrease in the number of people attending our clinics. Our other Fever Clinics and the drive-through Pine Rivers COVID-19 Community Assessment Clinic will continue for the time being.

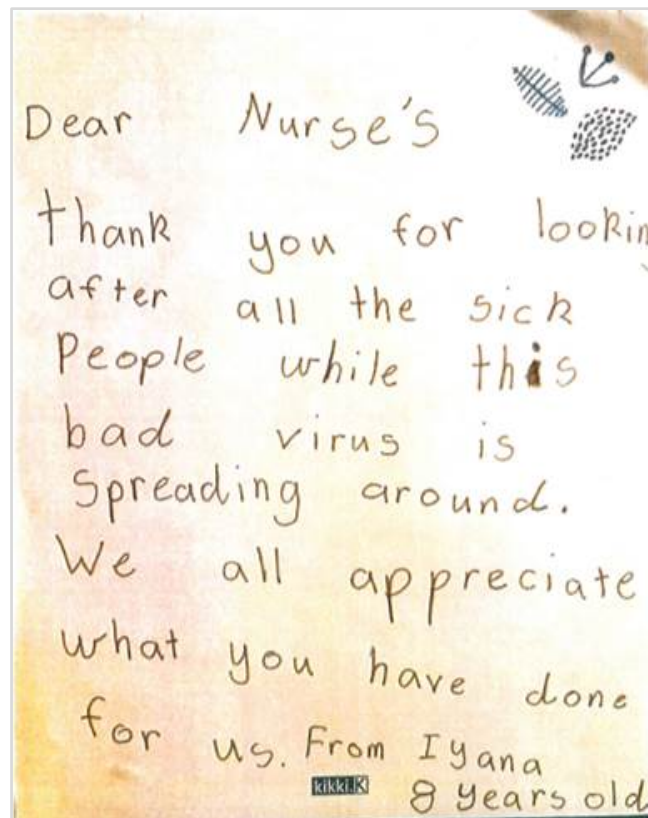
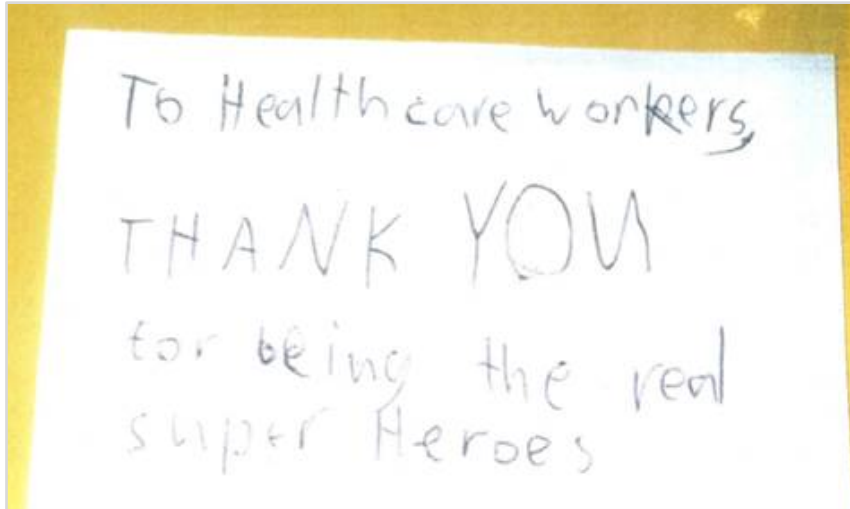
Thank you also to our infectious diseases and infection prevention and control teams for your ongoing commitment and support to Metro North, to the intensive care teams for your exceptional care of our critically ill, and to the staff at our fever and assessment clinics. Again, well done to patient support services staff for your efforts in managing COVID-19.

This means we can focus on what is needed now. As Shaun mentioned last week, we're now in a position to review our services and see what activity we can resume. We will do this in a considered way and proceed with caution, with the understanding that if we start to see a rapid increase in positive COVID-19 cases again we will reassess. We may need to flex up and down several times as we respond to the pandemic.

At this stage, we will be resuming Category 1 and 2 outpatient appointments and some long wait Category 3. We will continue to return any new Category 3 referrals back to the primary care referrer. In line with the Prime Minister's announcement yesterday, we will also begin booking elective surgeries for Category 1 and 2 and some Category 3.

Returning to activity as normal does not mean we are going back to doing everything as before. We have an opportunity to create a new normal, which is why we should not revert to doing business in a way that was not best for our patients. Booking all outpatients for the same time, for instance, is not acceptable. We also need to be extremely aware of physical distancing and limiting the number of staff and patients who are in one place. Where clinically appropriate, we will continue to offer telehealth or phone appointments. We will also be reviewing visitor restrictions with the possibility of relaxing them slightly.

I thought I would include some letters we've received from students at Iona College for everyone to enjoy. The community are thankful for all the work we're doing to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and their letters are a nice reminder of this.



I had planned to take leave when Shaun returned from Metro South, but things didn't quite go to plan. Now that things are a bit calmer, I will be taking a few weeks off. Tami Photinos will be acting ED Operations from 4-31 May while I'm on leave.

Regards,

Jackie