



## COVID-19 update 156 – 14/09/2020

Dear colleagues,

Happy Monday! I hope everyone managed to have some downtime over the weekend and recharge ready for another week. Case numbers remained low over the weekend with three new cases on Saturday and zero on Sunday.

Over the last 24 hours, a total of zero new positive COVID-19 cases have been recorded. There is a total of 30 active cases in the state with a total of 2,934 Queenslanders coming forward for testing yesterday. We will be continuing with our Tier 2 minus response plan, and will be reviewing this on Wednesday 16 September based on the CHO recommendations.

Today's updates include:

- Mask Update and Advice
- Face Masks and the Environment
- Hand Hygiene Products

### Mask Update and Advice

As mentioned in today's vidcast, from 5pm today universal mask wearing will not be required for staff working in non-clinical areas. A non-clinical area is an area that has no patients or practicing clinicians accessing it.

To clarify this instruction staff are still required to wear a mask if the following applies to you:

- If you are working in an area with patients and/or practicing clinicians
- If you are in transit through health service areas, including visiting cafeteria areas where there may be patients and practicing clinicians

Visitors will still be required to wear masks. Should you have any questions please refer them to your line manager who can access your local Emergency Operation team for advice if needed.

We sincerely thank all our staff who are new to wearing masks across the health service. This can be quite tough to get used to, especially if our skin isn't used to the constant contact. For those staff who are still required to wear a mask here are a few tips for those who might be experiencing mask related skin issues:

- A flat surgical mask should mould to the shape of your face and bridge of your nose, but it shouldn't be uncomfortable or dig into your skin. If your mask is donned correctly, it should be quite comfortable.
- Ensure you are stepping away from your work environment and get outside to have some mask free time (while physically distanced of course!).

For more mask tips and tricks, watch the [masks tips and tricks vidcast](#) or consult our [Mask Wearing FAQ's](#).

### Face Masks and the Environment

The disposal of our elastic ear loop masks was a hot topic in Friday's vidcast with some suggestions the ear loops should be removed or cut prior to discarding the masks to prevent wildlife becoming entangled in the loops of the mask.

The best way however to protect our wildlife is to ensure we dispose of our masks appropriately in the first instance.

The front of a used face mask should always be considered dirty and having unnecessary contact with the outside of a used mask to cut or remove elastic loops increases the risk of self-contamination. As with all PPE, once used, masks should be considered contaminated and need to be removed in a controlled manner and placed directly into the appropriate waste receptacle and hand hygiene performed.

As a healthcare organisation, all our waste is disposed of in accordance with the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* and we have a robust contract with our waste partners to ensure waste is disposed of appropriately minimising impact on wildlife.

We can all play our part by doing the right things and putting used masks directly into the bin. If you see littered masks, don't walk past them. If able, please dispose of them appropriately into bins (by wearing gloves and cleaning hands) or alert someone to help in cleaning them up.

### Hand Hygiene Products

In our healthcare environment our hands are one of the most important tools and with heightened need for hand hygiene we need to be caring for these tools. Staff should use the designated hand hygiene products available to them. Across our facilities this includes a suite of products; ph. neutral hand soaps, disinfectant hand wash solutions, alcohol hand hygiene products and a compatible barrier cream.

Staff should be discouraged from bringing their own products to work as they may hinder the performance of other products within our hand hygiene suite.

Skin health in general is extremely important as it's our body's first line of defence. Intact skin means the bugs can't get in... so please look after yours.

Make it a great week!

Kind regards,  
Mark Butterworth  
Metro North Incident Controller

Current MN Response Tier Activated – [Tier Two minus](#)

### Metro North HHS – overview of cases\*

HHS	Patients being managed by HHS					FEVER Clinics			
	Total In-patients			Virtual Ward / HITH / or similar	Deaths **	Total cases managed by HHS (including recovered) ***	# of clinics	Presentations	
	ICU Pts		ICU-NOT Ventilated					Last 24hrs	TOTAL^
	ICU-VENTILATED	ICU-NOT Ventilated							
MN	0	0	0	0	3	342	5	442	85,980
TOTAL									

\*With effect 14 September 2020, 1000

\*\*Metro North has three recorded deaths (one person a return traveller into NSW, who passed away in NSW)

\*\*\* These numbers reflect the cases being managed by Metro North.