



**TIME TO MASK UP, AND REDUCE INDOOR GATHERINGS**

AMA President, Dr Omar Khorshid, and AMA (NSW) President, Dr Danielle McMullen, today called on people in NSW to start wearing masks to contain COVID-19, particularly when indoors.

“The AMA – federally and in NSW - has been broadly supportive of the NSW Government’s approach to preventing the spread of COVID-19, but current indications are that it now needs to go further,” Dr Khorshid said.

“We’re at a time when NSW could go either way in terms of ending up like Victoria or moving back to a situation closer to where we were before this outbreak.”

AMA NSW President, Dr Danielle McMullen, said that the State Government and NSW Health have both been saying for some time that it is strongly recommended that people wear masks indoors, and when physical distancing is not possible.

“Their language on indoor gatherings – including restaurants, pubs, clubs, gyms, religious gatherings, and event visitors in people’s households – has also been becoming stronger,” Dr McMullen said.

“People shouldn’t need to be threatened with punishment to comply with sensible recommendations to prevent this very contagious and dangerous virus from spreading.

“The Government has been asking the community to do the right thing and while many people have responded, infections persist, and NSW is struggling to return to the previous environment where it had no community transmission.”

AMA (NSW) will continue to lobby the Government to tighten existing restrictions on indoor gatherings.

“We know this sounds like a lot to ask of the community, but the alternative to this is could very well be Victorian-style stage four lockdowns, and we do not want to see those kinds of conditions imposed in NSW,” Dr Khorshid said.

“All of this said, we would need both the NSW and Federal Governments to help people in the community and businesses, particularly for obtaining masks that provide adequate protection.”

“Even surgical and reusable masks that people in the community will need to comply with government advice can be very expensive and hard to obtain,” Dr McMullen said.

“If the Government does mandate the usage of masks, it has a responsibility to ensure that everyone who needs one can source one that is adequate to their needs.”

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