



Darling Downs  
Health



Queensland  
Government



Friday 18 December 2020

## Innovative hoods to keep rural hospitals COVID safe

Launch of exciting pilot program at Warwick Hospital, Warwick, Queensland, 10.30am (Qld time) today

**(Attending media – please arrive at the hospital by 10.15am)**

Innovative COVID ventilation hoods will be installed at various rural hospitals in Queensland's Darling Downs region, as part of an exciting pilot program providing an extra layer of safety to health professionals treating patients with confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19.

The pilot program will be launched today at Warwick Hospital.

The McMonty Medihood shows significant promise as a cost-effective way to help protect health professionals at rural hospitals – as well as other patients – from contracting COVID.

The hood was designed and developed by a University of Melbourne engineering team led by Professor Jason Monty (Head of Mechanical Engineering) in collaboration with Intensive Care specialist Associate Professor Forbes McGain from Western Health (Melbourne).

Associate Professor McGain has led promising results of a clinical trial of the hoods at Western Health's Sunshine Hospital (a major tertiary hospital), where more than 50 COVID patients have been treated.

The hoods are made in Australia by the Evan Evans manufacturing group spin off company, Medihood, helping ensure security of the Australian supply chain should COVID-19 impact international supply lines in the future.

The McMonty Medihoods are easy to install, with a transparent plastic cover that fits quickly above the head and torso of a patient in a hospital bed. The cover acts as a barrier between coronavirus patients and frontline healthcare workers, especially when a patient coughs or sneezes, or when they are being extubated. A pump sucks air from within the hood to a hospital-grade air filter behind the patient's bed.

Darling Downs Health has funded 4 hoods, which will be installed at Toowoomba, Dalby, Kingaroy and Warwick hospitals.

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) has funded 5 hoods, and the RDAQ Foundation a further 5 hoods, to be installed at some of the smaller rural hospitals in the Darling Downs region (see list below).

The Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine, through the joint RDAA and ACRRM COVID-19 Rural and Remote Response project, has been actively engaged in reviewing the hoods.

“RDAA is delighted to put our support behind the McMonty Medihoods. They are a very welcome addition to the safety equipment that rural hospitals can utilise, at a time when rural hospitals need comprehensive COVID management plans in place” **RDAA President, Dr John Hall, said.**

“The hoods will greatly assist rural hospitals when treating potential or confirmed COVID patients, and preventing further infection of health professionals, other hospital staff, other patients and visitors.

“The rate of health worker infection with COVID has been a significant concern during the pandemic.

“Based on the COVID outbreaks experienced in North West Tasmania and Broome earlier this year, it took approximately three days to deploy resources to protect those on the frontline at local hospitals from infection. In North West Tasmania, this resulted in a temporary closure of the hospital while it underwent a deep clean, and staff were stood down while awaiting test results.

“The McMonty Medihoods aim to create a safer environment for all those in rural hospitals, while also reducing the risk of service interruptions.

“We commend Professor Monty, Associate Professor McGain and their teams on the development of the hoods, and Darling Downs Health and the RDAQ Foundation for getting behind this pilot with us.”

**Health Service Chief Executive, Darling Downs Health, Dr Peter Gillies, said his organisation was keen to see the pilot program proceed.**

“As restrictions ease, these ventilation hoods could provide another layer of safety in Australia’s COVID response” he said.

“While negative pressure rooms are being installed at some of the larger regional and metropolitan hospitals in response to COVID, it’s not always possible to have these in every rural facility.

“Small rural hospitals need another option that can be installed easily and quickly, and can be effective in preventing the spread of COVID – we believe the McMonty Medihoods could achieve this.

“We are pleased to be supporting this innovative pilot program of the hoods at our rural hospitals in southern Queensland, and look forward to seeing the results.”

**RDAQ Foundation Spokesperson, Professor Tarun Sen Gupta, said it was great to see Queensland rural hospitals involved in the pilot program.**

“The McMonty Medihoods show significant potential in helping to minimise the transmission of coronavirus in rural hospitals” Professor Sen Gupta said.

“The RDAQ Foundation is very pleased to support the pilot program of this innovative and cost-effective equipment, that will help keep rural health professionals and patients safe should cases of COVID increase again in the future.”

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### **The launch of the pilot program in the Darling Downs region will take place today:**

**When:** 10.30am Queensland time, Friday 18 December 2020

**Where:** Warwick Hospital, Warwick, Queensland

**What:** Launch of the pilot program of McMonty Medihoods in rural hospitals

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### **The following representatives are available for interview:**

- Dr John Hall (RDAA) – photo [here](#).
  - Dr Peter Gillies (Darling Downs Health) – photo [here](#).
  - Professor Tarun Sen Gupta (RDAQ Foundation) – photo available via contacts below.
  - Associate Professor Forbes McGain (Western Health) – photo [here](#).
  - Professor Jason Monty (University of Melbourne) – pictured [here](#) with the Mechanical Engineering team. Professor Monty is in the white shirt. (Photo credit Cesar Nicolas, University of Melbourne).
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### **Media contacts:**

Patrick Daley (RDAA) on 0408 004 890

Ineke Kuiper (RDAA) on 0408 669 638

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## Multimedia

A video demonstrating the McMonty Medihood is available [by clicking here](#).

To watch a video of the iterative design process for the hood [click here](#).  
(please credit Cesar Nicolas, University of Melbourne).

A high resolution photo of the McMonty Medihood in use (with Associate Professor Forbes McGain at left) is available by [clicking here](#) (please credit Penny Stephens / Western Health).

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**As part of the pilot program, the McMonty Medihoods will be installed at the following hospitals:**

### Darling Downs Health funded hoods

- Toowoomba
- Dalby
- Kingaroy
- Warwick

### RDAA and RDAQ Foundation funded hoods

- Cherbourg
- Chinchilla
- Inglewood
- Jandowae
- Miles
- Millmerran
- Murgon
- Nanango
- Tara
- Texas