



ANZCA
FPM

President

Australian and New Zealand
College of Anaesthetists

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Professor Paul Kelly
Chief Medical Officer
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By email:

Dear Professor Kelly

Australia's Epidemiology and COVID-19 Vaccine Roadmap

Our college has been working closely with all specialist medical colleges over the past ten months as the pandemic has progressed. We have been working particularly closely with the College of Intensive Care Medicine and the Australasian College of Emergency Medicine, as well as the Australian Society of Anaesthetists and the Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society.

We have followed with interest the progress toward the roll-out of the national COVID-19 vaccination program. Whilst I acknowledge that there is still great uncertainty around the availability of vaccines and the logistics of distributing and administering them, a significant number of anaesthetists in Australia have contacted me to seek clarity on who will be considered priority frontline healthcare workers, and thus which phase of the roll-out strategy will see them be able to be vaccinated. This has been a particular point of concern for many anaesthetists who were caring for COVID-19 patients, regularly undertaking aerosol generating intubation and also having to assist with providing care in intensive care units during the first/second waves of the pandemic in Australia.

We have recently received a powerpoint presentation via a meeting of the Council of Presidents of Medical Colleges on 21 January that provides an overview of Australia's Epidemiology and COVID-19 Vaccine Roadmap. It indicates that roughly 10 per cent of healthcare workers are considered frontline and will be prioritised for vaccination during Phase 1a, with the remainder being vaccinated during Phase 1b.

Are you able to provide more guidance about what criteria are being considered to determine which healthcare workers are considered frontline? Anaesthetists often perform procedures which are considered aerosol-generating during their routine duties, and were called upon to intubate patients with COVID-19 during Australia's first and second waves in 2020.

Thank you for considering my request for further information. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Dr Vanessa Beavis
President, ANZCA