



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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# **CATHOLIC SECTOR HONOURS ITS MASKED HEROES WITH SERIES OF FILMS THANKING THEM**

Catholic Health Australia will pay tribute to the 80,000 hospital and aged care workers across its member network for their extraordinary efforts during the Covid-19 crisis with a series of new films.

CHA, the largest grouping of non-government health and aged care services in Australia, has released a series of videos individually highlighting the work of a range of staff across the CHA network, including clinicians, cleaners and cooks.

The videos were shot in Melbourne at three locations as the second wave of Covid-19 hit the city but represent the collective efforts of all the sector's employees across Australia.

The fly-on-the-wall films do not have a voiceover, but rather rely on real footage to depict each person's day as faithfully as possible.

CHA chief executive Pat Garcia said he wanted the Catholic sector to pay tribute to those who worked tirelessly to keep the community safe.

"The hospitals and aged care facilities in the Catholic Health Australia family are so proud of their hardworking staff and we wanted to document that both to thank them now and for posterity," Mr Garcia said.

"These quiet heroes have turned up to work every day to help people, often in the face of considerable risks to themselves.

"I know that I speak for all our members when I say that they truly are our masked heroes. But, despite their masks, they are all named in the film. We want to acknowledge the human beings behind the work.

"They have lived the Catholic values of treating people as whole human beings with kindness and compassion. They have brought dignity and strength to those in need. We thank them."

The films were shot by The Jasper Picture Company on location at St Vincent's Hospital, Fitzroy, Mercy Hospital in Werribee and residential aged care facility, Mercy Place East Melbourne.

Toby Hall Group CEO of St Vincent's Health Australia said: "Throughout the pandemic, whether in hospitals or aged care, whether in frontline clinical or back office administrative roles – from



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theatres through to food preparation areas – the Catholic health and aged care sector has only been able to meet the challenges of the moment because of the efforts and excellence of its people.

"These short films provide a valuable glimpse into that remarkable effort, something which we've seen right across the entire sector."

Mercy Health Group Chief Executive Adjunct Professor Stephen Cornelissen said: "Over a fortnight or so, the hospital and the Wyndham community was in a precarious situation. The numbers of patients testing positive, compounded by the numbers of staff in contact with those cases threatened to furlough so many staff that the hospital could have been faced with the need to shut its doors.

"At its height the second wave of this terrible pandemic added extraordinary pressure and danger to the work of our Werribee staff.

"Werribee Mercy Hospital operates in the fastest growing local area in Victoria and it was one of Victoria's most serious COVID-19 hotspots – our hospital would have been brought to its knees, other than for the heroic efforts of our staff."

The Mercy Health staff featured are:

Alicia Calleja (Werribee Mercy Hospital clinical nurse covid-19);  
Michael Guario (Mercy Place East Melbourne catering and housekeeping manager);  
Sonam Lama (Mercy Place East Melbourne enrolled nurse);

You can view the videos here <https://cha.org.au/thankyou>