

MEDIA STATEMENT

From:	Bill Lane, Media Manager, Mercy Health Ph: 0477 720 337 Email: BLane@mercy.com.au
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Mercy Health Group Chief Executive Adjunct Professor Stephen Cornelissen has today praised the heroic work of frontline health workers at Werribee Mercy Hospital, which became a hotspot and battleground in the fight against the spread of coronavirus.

Adj. Prof. Cornelissen said over many months now, Mercy Health staff had shown constant care and compassion to protect their patients, aged care residents and other community and home care clients.

“While the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other infection control practices have been critical tools for Mercy Health in keeping the virus at bay, we know there can be no absolute guarantees that workers are 100 percent insulated from this insidious virus.

“Our team’s bravery and the support of their families who watched workers return to work each day can never be understated or permitted to be forgotten.”

Adj. Prof. Cornelissen made his comments while welcoming the release of a series of tribute videos produced by Catholic Health Australia, which thanks Catholic health and aged care workers nationally for their tireless efforts, skills and bravery in the face of the pandemic.

Adj. Prof. Cornelissen said while he was not underplaying the efforts of any of Mercy Health workers, there needed to be some focus and tribute paid to personnel at Werribee Mercy Hospital located in the West of Melbourne.

“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.”

Adj. Prof. Cornelissen is quick to warn against complacency. “The fight has not been won and while Victorians have an entitlement to be proud, now is not the time to become complacent with hygiene practices and testing,” he said.

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