

19 December 2023

To: The COVID-19 Response Inquiry Panel

Via Website Submission: [Call for submissions and evidence to the COVID-19 Response Inquiry | PM&C \(pmc.gov.au\)](#)

To The COVID-19 Response Inquiry Panel

Re: COVID-19 Response Inquiry Panel

The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) is the leading organisation representing pathologists and senior laboratory scientists in Australasia. Its mission is to train and support pathologists and to improve the use of pathology testing to achieve better healthcare.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the College played a vital role in supporting healthcare messaging and education to the public in attempts to counter misinformation. The College contributed over 1000 media pieces across all media modalities during the pandemic.

It is strongly advised that the panel consider the role played by both the public and the private pathology sectors in the COVID-19 response. They both had a critical role in evaluating, performing testing, adapting to the changing needs and circumstances, and the delivery of results to patients and to Health departments in a timely, efficient manner. The College acted as a conduit to support this efficiency and lead the discussions regarding costings of the SARS-CoV-2 MBS item and adoption of the direct-to-consumer COVID-19 PCR test results. This allowed for appropriate remuneration of pathology labs in delivering this critical service and aided in advancing technological change that is still being seen today.

Additionally, through its extensive networks, the College provided the Department of Health (DOH) with continued oversight and support of the delivery of high-quality pathology in our country despite often extreme and challenging circumstances. This relationship cemented the advocacy role of the College, and the strong relationship between the DOH and RCPA continues to this date.

The College looks forward to the findings of the COVID-19 response panel and the continued acknowledgement of how the pathology sector contributed to Australia's successful management of the pandemic.

If you have any questions, please contact president@rcpa.edu.au

Sincerely,



A/Prof Trishe Leong
President
Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia