

## SAANZ2022 Conference

### COVID-19 Safety Plan

**Massey University, Albany (December 6-8, 2022)**

On 12 September, 2022 the NZ Government ended the COVID-19 Protection Framework and with this mandates to wear masks, contact tracing, and other pandemic control measures were effectively discontinued (aside from household isolation of individuals testing positive and mask-wearing/ RAT testing in healthcare facilities such as hospital, GPs, pharmacies and aged cared residential facilities).

Nevertheless, COVID-19 remains an active virus in the general population and accordingly significant number of individuals – such as older people and people with existing health conditions – remain at a higher risk of more severe illness if they contract COVID-19. Under these circumstances we are clearly stronger when we all voluntarily commit to COVID safety precautions. Indeed undertaking proactive and ‘when feeling ill’ RAT Tests, while also committing to consistent masking and physical distancing whenever possible, greatly assists in keeping the conference space safe for everyone. As one attendee noted: “Let’s live our values and test and mask for each other.”

Accordingly, the Organising Committee of SAANZ2022 has approved the following COVID-19 safety plan, which is based on the *New Zealand Event Sector Voluntary Code, V2* (October 2020). It is noted that operationalisation of this plan by individuals is wholly voluntary, but that all conference attendees are asked to assist in implementation in mindfulness of the COVID vulnerable.

- All conference attendees are encouraged to proactively undertake a rapid anti-gen test (RAT) and to test negative for COVID before attending the conference.
- All attendees will be given free RAT tests upon arrival at the conference and are encouraged to proactively use these on a daily basis (and whenever experiencing COVID, cold or flu-like symptoms) to determine they have tested negative for COVID before attending the conference.
- All attendees will be given free masks upon arrival at the conference and are encouraged to use these, except for when eating, drinking and presenting.
- Hand sanitizer stations, together with freely available face masks, will be situated in the conference foyer.
- All conference attendees are also encouraged to physically distant (2m), and to regularly hand sanitize, in mindfulness of COVID vulnerable conference attendees.
- The Conference Convenor will liaise with Facilities Management at Massey Albany to ensure ventilation capabilities in the conference foyer, lecture theatres and presentation rooms are operationalised as much as possible to help reduce the risk of airborne transmission of COVID-19 while maintaining comfortable indoor temperatures.
- Where possible designated rows of seats with marked physical distancing (2m) in lectures theatres and presentation rooms will be set aside for COVID vulnerable persons.
- Session chairs will be asked to remind individuals of the voluntary conference COVID safety protocols at the beginning of all presentation sessions.

- Attendees are strongly advised not to attend the conference if feeling at all ill and to immediately inform (by email or text message) the conference convener if they do become ill with potential COVID-19 symptoms during the conference.

The Conference organisers warmly acknowledge the input of conference attendees in developing this plan and of the Ministry of Health for freely providing RAT Tests (n = 500) and face masks (n =1000) to enable its implementation.

Dr Peter J. Howland  
Conference Convener  
04 November 2022