

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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### **MEDICAL SUPPORT WORKERS ARE ESSENTIAL**

AMA Queensland has written to the Minister for Health calling for all medical support workers to be reclassified as essential workers so they can cross the Queensland-New South Wales border.

The Queensland Government last week tightened its essential worker definition for the medical workforce to just those regulated by AHPRA, meaning that orderlies, cleaners, caterers and administrative staff can no longer cross the border.

“The Queensland Government is doing all it can to keep COVID, and particularly the Delta strain, out of our state,” AMA Queensland President Professor Chris Perry said today.

“However, all workers at hospitals, GP clinics, and other specialist private practices are essential. The cleaners are just as important as the clinicians.

“We are hearing stories about surgeons having to wheel patients into operating theatres, about nurses having to sterilise equipment, about physios having to strip beds and GPs left with no staff to answer the phones.

“This can only lead to poorer outcomes for patients.

“The definition must be revised as a matter of urgency, and I have written again to the government asking for urgent action.

“As long as there is no COVID in the Tweed region, all health care and medical support workers should be regarded as essential workers and be allowed to move between the Gold Coast University Hospital, Tweed Heads Hospital and the other health care facilities.

“We have already written to the government calling for the border checkpoint to be moved further south. If that can’t happen, at least we can change the definition of essential worker to recognise that health care can’t run without support staff.

“It’s ridiculous that we have doctors, nurses and patients stranded because of a line on a map. It’s time for national leadership on this issue for all border communities around Australia.”

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