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COVID FIGHT BOOST Hospital boosted by special hoods



Sunraysia Daily, Mildura



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Pictured with one of the new ventilation hoods are Forbes McGain (Western Health) with Mildura Base Public Hospital's Dr Alison Walker, Terry Welch and Dr Tom Gleeson. Picture: Ben Gross

# Hospital boosted by special hoods

By Matt Taylor  
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MILDURA Base Public Hospital has taken another big step in the fight against the coronavirus by unveiling five new Isolation Hoods, which protect both patients and healthcare workers, as it became the first regional and rural hospital in Australia to receive this equipment yesterday.

Terry Welch, the hospital's chief executive officer, hailed the protective hoods' arrival as a "groundbreaking day for Mildura".

"Our focus is on the safety and wellbeing of our staff. And we've had a tremendous record over the whole COVID experience of protecting staff in every way we can.

"Another example today is these hoods (which) add the increased layer and barrier to infection for our staff, while not impeding the ability to provide great care."

University of Melbourne researchers, working in collaboration with Western Health, designed the personal ventilation hood for hospital beds to help contain the spread of COVID-19 in intensive care units.

It has been used in clinical studies at Sunshine and Footscray hospitals, and now it is being used at Royal Melbourne Hospital and in Mildura. Doctors say the trials showed it was very effective in the fight against spreading the coronavirus.

The hoods can also be used for patients with influenza and tuberculosis.

Dr Forbes McGain, an intensive-care specialist at Western Health, said it was a device to protect both patients and healthcare workers "from cross-contamination with COVID-19 or other respiratory infectious conditions".

"It is unique in that it's a non-sealed personal protection hood that has a very high flow range of about 100 air changes an hour," Dr McGain said.

"It pulls air very rapidly in away from the health-care worker to the patient and then scrubs the air at the back with a big filter that is designed to prevent the virus from being spread where the patients happens to be.

"It's good for the patient's therapies and good for



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healthcare workers to prevent the spread of infection.”

At first glance it looks claustrophobic. Asked whether it would be suitable for patients who have a fear of confined places, Dr McGain said: “It shouldn’t be used for people who are claustrophobic.

“That’s why we also have to be careful with its use with aged care, or demented patients.”



Mildura Base Public Hospital CEO Terry Welch speaks with the media yesterday.

Picture: Ben Gross