



09 APR, 2020

HOPE UNDER THE HOOD

Herald Sun, Melbourne



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HOPE UNDER THE HOOD

Melbourne engineers and doctors have taken just 12 days to invent a new "hood" to protect healthcare workers and our sickest coronavirus patients

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ICU specialist Dr Forbes McGain and the protective hood. Picture: TONY GOUGH

HOOD OF HOPE FOR COVID-19 PATIENTS

GRANT MCARTHUR

PROTECTIVE hoods that save the sickest COVID-19 patients while safeguarding medics could be rolled out in record time by Melbourne engineers and doctors.

In just 12 days, intensive care specialists from Western Health and

University of Melbourne engineers teamed up to invent a hood capable of expelling infectious air and droplets.

The transparent and movable hoods protect hospital workers and allow severely unwell patients to use oxygen therapies, which are otherwise too risky for COVID-19 cases.

With several Victorian manufacturers to make the devices, Associate Professor Forbes McGain, of Western Health, expects there will be high demand.

"There is an enormous amount of fear and worry about personal protective equipment. This starts to

address that worry and is a really practical solution,' Assoc Prof McGain said. "We are pretty excited. I think it could be very widely used worldwide."

While COVID-19 gets passed through droplets, the high-pressure breathing machines used in intensive

care units are thought to "blast" the virus into vapour, making the air deadly.

After he was approached about a way to better isolate COVID-19 patients, Melbourne University Professor of Fluid Mechanics Jason Monty, designed a 1.2m clear dome that can be wheeled over a

patient to protect doctors and nurses from droplets.

Fitted with a heavy-duty fan behind the patient's head, the hood can also suck infected aerosols into a filter, which makes it safe to use high-pressure breathing support rather than having to put patients on full ventilation.

"Every hospital I talk to wants as many as they can get their hands on," Prof Monty said.

"Within a week or two we could be rolling out hundreds of them. Local manufacturers are building them now and they are gearing up to make as many as we need."



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ICU specialist Assoc Prof Forbes McGain speaks to a patient through a new protective hood. Picture: TONY GOUGH