

## Media Release

### Surgeons anticipate surge of preventable injury during Coronavirus pandemic

27 March 2020

As Australians respond to the Coronavirus pandemic, trauma surgeons have expressed concern that an unintended consequence, may be an increase in trauma related hospitalisations across Australia.

Dr John Crozier, Chair of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) Trauma Committee said that Emergency Departments were already noticing the effects of the pandemic.

“Over the weekend many of my colleagues reported a noticeable spike in the number of trauma related presentations. Some surgeons informed me that they experienced record numbers of trauma at their hospitals.

“A concerning number of the cases managed were preventable and related to alcohol related risk-taking behaviours. This includes drink driving. Police have indicated that they are finding harder to enforce drink driving countermeasures.

“We know that according to the World Health Organization alcohol is already a factor in almost a third of trauma related presentations. When it was announced pubs and clubs were closing, we saw many takeaway liquor outlets inundated with customers. Authorities then made it very clear that there were no restrictions on the sale of takeaway liquor which I found very concerning.

“The Western Australian Government have since made the very sensible decision to limit the sale of takeaway alcohol, and I would encourage all other governments to follow their lead.

“I understand that there is uncertainty and fear amongst our community at the moment, but I plead with everyone to look out for one another, behave responsibly, and avoid risk taking behaviours.

“We must reduce the number of patients coming to hospital, not only COVID-19 related presentations, but also those with preventable injury or trauma. This is crucial if we are to achieve the best outcome for the greatest number of patients, in the clinically challenging weeks ahead”

---

**Media enquiries:** Mark Morgan, Policy and Communications Officer

**Contact:** 0488 218 009

**About the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS)**

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery. [www.surgeons.org](http://www.surgeons.org)