



AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION  
(SOUTH AUSTRALIA) INC.  
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## **AMA(SA) Letter to the Editor**

**Submitted 17 November 2023**

Caleb Bond's column (*The Advertiser*, 17 November 2023) has contributed to the spreading of misinformation and lies as well as insulting doctors who have worked tirelessly to protect their patients and communities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr Bond suggests 'life is normal' because 'no one has died with COVID this week'. He neglects to mention that about 2,500 people have tested positive, and – considering the more relaxed attitude to testing – there are probably many more infectious people in the state. At the moment, we all know someone with COVID. Businesses cannot operate efficiently because they do not have staff. Health workplaces cannot offer the care they need. Students are missing school and exams.

So, we doctors want to warn people about the increased risk. We are asking people to follow the hygiene practices we've recommended throughout the pandemic. We're asking them to have vaccinations. We're asking them to wear masks in health settings, to protect themselves and the vulnerable. We're asking people to remember that COVID is not and has never been 'mild'. I'm sure the families of the 1,632 people who have died of COVID in South Australia will agree with me.

In addition, Mr Bond's assertion that masks are 'near useless' contradicts the many studies that have found masks to be effective in preventing infection, including against COVID. A recent study published in August – one that has investigated the studies that have measured effectiveness – finds that overwhelming evidence does exist that mask-wearing and mask mandates reduce infection.

Mr Bond also claimed that doctors – including SA’s own Professor Nicola Spurrier and AMA Queensland President Dr Maria Boulton – are now making public appearances to warn the public about COVID-19 because of ‘relevance deprivation syndrome’. Prof Spurrier, Dr Boulton and thousands of doctors across this country are way too busy to worry about being ‘relevant’. Doctors are working with nurses and other colleagues night and day to keep people healthy and safe. We know COVID can cause serious illness, long COVID and death. I hope Mr Bond doesn’t have cause to find out how busy we really are.