



ACIPC

Australasian College
for Infection Prevention and Control

20.11.24

PEAK INFECTION PREVENTION BODY SUPPORTS SAFER SHARED AIR REPORT ON INDOOR AIR QUALITY

Improving indoor air quality (IAQ) in healthcare settings is an essential Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) strategy to protect the health and wellbeing of patients, residents and community members. The Safer Air project report: *Safer shared air, a critical accessibility and inclusion issue*, highlights the urgent need to improve IAQ to create healthier, more inclusive environments. The report emphasises the impact poor IAQ can have on chronic illness and the transmission of airborne diseases including COVID-19 and influenza.

The Safer Air project is advocating for the recognition of IAQ in enhancing health equity through the creation of safe indoor spaces, and is calling for the Federal Government to acknowledge IAQ as an accessibility issue that must be addressed, to set performance standards for IAQ that will lower the risk of infection by airborne pathogens in all settings, and to recognise that IPC extends far greater than the healthcare setting, incorporating the whole community and impacting education, disability, aged care and workplace settings.

The Safer Air Project and the Australasian College for Infection Prevention and Control (ACIPC) are calling for the newly established Australian Centre for Disease Control (CDC) to include IPC in its remit, to provide updated IPC guidance for all settings, and to include strategies to mitigate the prevention of transmission of airborne pathogens, adopting a whole of community approach.

The inconsistency that exists throughout the IPC and public health landscape within Australia, combined with the lack of national guidelines and benchmarks, has created significant variability in the design, structure and allocation of resources to IPC programs. This has resulted in an inconsistent approach to IPC and confusion of IPC practices within community settings. The integration of IPC within the CDC framework will provide a comprehensive infrastructure and allow healthcare facilities and community settings to implement standardised protocols and guidelines that will prioritise air quality, optimise ventilation, reduce transmission of pathogens, and provide structure to IPC programs to create safer settings that will impact the lives of all Australians.

It is crucial that IPC is acknowledged as a specialist field within the CDC, and as an established discipline that can influence and strengthen both health and wider community settings. Integrating IPC into the CDC is a logical and imperative step to safeguard public health, to optimise resources, promote collaboration, and demonstrate leadership in disease prevention and control.

ACIPC advocates for the Safer Air Project recommendations to improve IAQ as a critical step towards improving IPC outcomes across all aspects of the community.

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