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Type: **Oral presentation**

Operating the Australian Synchrotron During The Pandemic

Tuesday, 5 October 2021 15:50 (25 minutes)

My talk will focus on the synchrotron's operations team's response to Victoria's Covid-19 outbreak broken into four distinct periods.

From March of 2020 to May 2020 the state government restricted the number of workers allowed on site, and only permitted research on Covid-19 or research otherwise essential to national security. Operations ran the accelerator "on demand" for the first time in its history – turning on the accelerators when required for Covid research and idling them when not in use. When not in use the operators developed machine checklists to verify mission-readiness.

From June 2020 to October 2020 the state government eased restrictions on research, so the synchrotron returned to regularly scheduled user beam periods, but with greatly reduced staff on site. During this time Operators implemented contact-tracing in logs for staff and users.

From October 2020 to June 2021 lockdown restrictions eased and more staff returned to site. Some interstate travel was allowed, but with varying levels of restrictions. Covid testing requirements meant that visiting users would need to get a Covid test and self-isolate in the Synchrotron's guesthouse if they felt ill. Results took approximately 24 hours, and during that time Operators were called on to check in with isolating users.

The current epoch began with the arrival of the Delta variant in July of 2021. We have workshopped responses to a Covid-infected staff member coming to the synchrotron and expect interruptions to user beam when that occurs. We have communicated that to synchrotron and ANSTO management and developed a plan for return to delivery.

To date, the synchrotron has not had a single positive Covid-19 case. With the ongoing Delta-variant outbreak, I expect that to change soon, but nevertheless our experience is useful to share lessons learned in communicating expectations with government, management, and the user community.

Session

Session II: Running a Beam Particle Accelerator during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Session Classification: First reactions to the pandemic

Track Classification: Track I: First reactions to the pandemic