# Video Transcript

## 2023-24 Premier Awards for Health and Medical Research Dr Rob Mitchell

### Dr Rob Mitchell

My name is Rob Mitchell. I’m an Emergency Physician at Alfred Health, and I’ve also just completed a PhD through the Monash University School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine.

Text: 2023-24 Premier’s Awards for Health and Medical Research. Dr Rob Mitchell, Health Services Researcher Award.

Text: Why did you become a health or medical researcher?

### Dr Rob Mitchell

I work in an emergency department, it’s a really complex operating environment, so I’m constantly thinking, like my colleagues, how can we do things better, how can we do things more efficiently.

Vision: View of Rob working at the emergency department.

So that’s led to me having an interest in emergency department systems and processes.

A lot of my work, although my day job’s here in Melbourne, is actually focused on the Pacific region, and particularly supporting our colleagues in low and middle income countries.

Text: What problem is your project addressing?

### Dr Rob Mitchell

I’ve previously had the opportunity to work with colleagues in countries such as Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, in those, kind of, underdeveloped settings you can imagine the demands for care are massive, so it’s really important that there are systems in place that can rapidly identify patients who have time-critical illnesses.

So my work has been focused on the concept of triage, introducing really simple processes that allow healthcare workers at the front door of hospitals to really quickly determine if patients are seriously unwell and require urgent intervention and assessment.

Vision: View of Rob working in the emergency department.

### Dr Rob Mitchell

And so my work was undertaken predominantly in Papua New Guinea, but also across the broader Pacific region.

I worked with local colleagues to implement and evaluate a brand new triage system.

It’s a really simple concept. It’s a traffic light system, whereby patients who present are assessed and allocated either a red, yellow or green category based on the urgency of their presentation.

We then work with colleagues to implement systems to make sure that patients are seen in the most appropriate order.

We then evaluate it to make sure that it was safe and it was efficient and it was effective.

Text: What have the project results been?

Vision: View of Rob working with equipment in the emergency department.

It’s developed by the World Health Organisation, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Medecin Sans Frontières was released early in the COVIC pandemic but there hadn’t been an opportunity to independently and rigorously evaluate it in the field.

So look, I was really fortunate to have the opportunity to work with local colleagues to be able to that in a really robust way, and pleased to report the results were really positive.

So we were able to implement the system across all emergency departments in Papua New Guinea and in each setting the tool was highly valued by local clinicians.

They found that it really helped their work practices.

Vision: View of Rob working at the computer.

### Dr Rob Mitchell

It was really efficient to apply and enable community health workers and nurses in particular to really rapid assessment when patients arrived to the emergency department.

But most importantly it’s safe and it’s effective so it performs just as well as other more established triage systems despite being much more simple in its approach.

Text: How could this project make a difference to people’s lives?

### Dr Rob Mitchell

Well I hope it’s already making a difference to be honest.

You know, as a result of this research the tool has already been implemented across a range of emergency departments in Papua New Guinea and in the broader Pacific region.

It’s been adopted as the kind of defacto national triage tool in Papua New Guinea, and we’ve been able to work with local colleagues to conduct some training and trainer activities to assist with that broader roll out.

But more importantly I think it’ll give colleagues in other parts of the world the confidence to be able to implement this tool in their setting, but also know that it’s safe, that it’s effective, and it’s efficient.

Vision: View of Rob walking through corridor to the emergency department.

### Dr Rob Mitchell

And because it’s very simple to use it will have a really positive impact on patients across the whole world when they present to emergency departments acutely unwell or injured.

Text: 2023-24 Premier’s Awards for Health and Medical Research. Celebrating the achievements of Victoria’s early career health and medical researchers.

Text: Victoria State Government. Authorised by the Victorian government, Melbourne.