

# Media Release

**The Hon Jenny Mikakos MLC**  
Minister for Health  
Minister for Ambulance Services



Wednesday, 25 March 2020

## **ELECTIVE SURGERY WOUND BACK TO PREPARE FOR CORONAVIRUS**

Victoria's public hospitals have today been directed to begin winding back all non-urgent surgery, where it is safe to do so, as preparations escalate for the health system to cope with the coronavirus pandemic.

While hospital admissions for coronavirus patients remain low, they are rising daily, and when peak demand from the pandemic hits Victoria's hospitals will be seriously tested.

The Victorian Government is working with public and private hospitals on a system-wide response including how to preserve critical resources for when they will need them most – that means beds, staff and supplies – not just to care for coronavirus patients but to keep looking after all Victorians in need of emergency and urgent care.

From midnight, no further category three elective surgeries will take place until further notice, while category two surgeries will only happen if delays would pose a serious risk to the health of the patient.

This is consistent with a decision of the National Cabinet acting on advice from the AHPPC that until further notice all elective surgery, other than urgent cases, will be suspended. This will apply to both public and private hospitals.

This will not affect emergency surgery, or category one elective surgeries including those booked in as part of our elective surgery blitz – which are considered the most urgent including urgent heart, neurological and cancer procedures.

As the pandemic progresses the Department of Health and Human Services will actively plan for these services to recommence, including surge capacity to reduce waitlists, when it is safe to do so.

For the latest information and advice on coronavirus visit [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus)

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos**

*"We need to wind-up non urgent surgery because coronavirus cases continue to rise."*

*"We are making these decisions in order to protect patients, health care workers and their families from this deadly virus."*

*"Everybody has a role to play in slowing the spread of coronavirus and to take the pressure off our health system. Our message is clear: if you can, you must stay at home."*