

Media Release

The Hon Martin Foley MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services
Minister for Equality



Thursday, 4 February 2021

HOSPITALS HOLD FIRM COMING BACK TO COVIDNORMAL

Victoria's most ill and seriously injured patients continued to receive immediate and high-quality care in hospitals and health services across the state, including through peak demand during the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

Minister for Health and Ambulance Services Martin Foley today released Victoria's December quarter health service and ambulance performance data. More than 43,000 elective surgery patients received their operations and came off the waiting list in the three-month reporting period.

The report shows 100 per cent of the most seriously ill and injured Category 1 emergency patients were treated immediately upon arrival at hospital in the December quarter, and 100 per cent of the most urgent Category 1 elective surgery patients received their operations within the benchmark 30 days – half of them within 11 days.

Moving into COVIDNormal has enabled hospitals to tackle the backlog of Category 2 and 3 elective surgery, which had been cancelled as hospitals geared up to deal with the pandemic.

The Andrews Labor Government announced a massive \$300 million elective surgery blitz in the *Victorian Budget 2020-21* to ensure Victorians can get the surgeries they need, when they need them.

Hospitals provided operations and treatments to a massive 43,046 patients from the waiting list in the December quarter. The waiting list at December 31 was 65,621.

Hospitals were busier than they had been at the peak of the pandemic, admitting 476,191 patients in the December quarter – 47,583 more than the September quarter. Hospitals also saw 447,181 patients through their emergency departments – up by 83,979 on the previous three months.

While Victoria's paramedics also had to perform their roles under extra pressure, donning full PPE while treating potential or suspected coronavirus cases, ambulances still arrived at 79.3 per cent of Code 1 emergency call-outs within the benchmark 15 minutes, reaching scenes in an average 12 minutes and 16 seconds.

Ambulance Victoria also saw an extra 10,000 call-outs – with 78,653 calls for the December quarter, compared with 68,667 in the previous three months.

To keep pace with this growing demand, the Labor Government is providing an extra \$14.8 million in funding to Ambulance Victoria – delivering more paramedics and more ambulances in the coming months, with additional Peak Period Units (PPUs) being deployed across Victoria, particularly in rural and regional centres.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

"Our doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers have done an incredible job ensuring that even during a pandemic, Victorians continue to receive world class care."

"It is important that the community has confidence in our hospital and ambulance system, and the latest performance data shows that Victorians continue to receive the care and treatment they expect and deserve."

"Our massive \$300 million elective surgery blitz is now working through the patients who were put on hold as we focused on beating this deadly virus."

Media contact: Matilda Edwards Jézéquel 0447 422 464 | matilda.edwards-jezequel@minstaff.vic.gov.au