



# Resumption of elective surgery in Victoria desperately needed

Australian Orthopaedic Association

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The Australian Orthopaedic Association is calling on the Victorian Government to lift its ban on elective orthopaedic surgery in the state effectively immediately.

Australian Orthopaedic Association (AOA) President Dr Michael Gillespie said, "It is unreasonable to continue with elective surgery restrictions given the easing of retail, hospitality and junior sports restrictions that have recently come into effect.

"The AOA is committed to working with the Australian Medical Association to advocate for our patients in Victoria, some of whom are in great pain, and have had their planned surgeries cancelled due to the unnecessary restrictions enforced by Victorian Health.

"We recognise that safety of patients and the health workforce is paramount, particularly during the pandemic; however, the COVID risk is minimal to both patients and staff and the current ban on elective surgeries is inconsistent with other restrictions being lifted in Victoria.

"It was understandable last year when we feared the medical capability of our nation being overrun by COVID-19 cases. To stand down medical staff and cancel planned operations in the current environment appears heartless," said Dr Gillespie.

When restrictions ease, AOA expects surgeons to work with hospitals to prioritise their patients' needs for surgery, accounting for risk factors and co-morbidities, while having regard for the safety and availability of health care workers and hospital facilities.

"Surgeons should choose wisely, in conjunction with their patients and anaesthetists, to prioritise operations of great benefit and lower risk at this time.

"Double theatres should be avoided, surgery should be consultant-performed as much as practicable, and all efforts should be made to use the theatre resource wisely and in a time-efficient manner.

"It may be some time before the elective surgery system is back to normal in Victoria with already large backlogs of patients prior to the recent snap lock-down. The surge in activity after the ban will heavily impact nursing and surgical staff with risks of burnout a real possibility," added Dr Gillespie.

MEDIA RELEASE

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## About the Australian Orthopaedic Association

The Australian Orthopaedic Association (AOA) is the peak professional body for orthopaedic surgeons in Australia. AOA provides high quality specialist education, training and continuing professional development. AOA is committed to ensuring the highest possible standard of orthopaedic care and is the leading authority in the provision of orthopaedic information to the community. AOA actively supports scientific research and orthopaedic humanitarian initiatives in Australia and overseas.