
ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

MEDIA RELEASE



College of Surgeons fears for patients

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Surgeons have voiced their dismay at the sudden and dramatic funding cuts being inflicted on Victorian public hospitals, noting that it will affect elective surgery more than any other hospital activity.

The President of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, Associate Professor Michael Hollands, said the funding issues in Victoria were having a detrimental effect on patients who had already waited too long for their surgery.

“There is a real concern that individual patients’ conditions will deteriorate even to the point of requiring emergency interventions – significantly more expensive and dangerous than elective procedures,” he said.

“Undoubtedly waiting lists will grow.

“Patients who are waiting for surgery will still need their operation, and cancellation of elective surgery will only delay the inevitable expenditure.

“And the problem is by no means confined to Victoria. Across all jurisdictions it is elective surgery which is the first activity to bear the brunt of funding cuts to a health system. This is because it is really the only discretionary activity undertaken by our public hospitals.”

Associate Professor Hollands renewed the College’s call for a single funder of public health systems across Australia.

“The College has long been on the record as supporting the single funder model. It is the only way of ensuring an end to the sort of blame game we are witnessing in Victoria at the moment.

“The promise was that recent reforms to public hospital funding would end the blame game. The events of recent weeks suggest that this is not the case.

“The College calls on governments across Australia to fix a public health system that is unsustainable in its current form. As a first step this must involve the implementation of a single funder model,” Associate Professor Hollands said.

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