



AOA  
AUSTRALIAN  
ORTHOPAEDIC  
ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

# Resumption of elective surgery in Victoria desperately needed

THURSDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2022 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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) State Chair, Dr Adrian Trivett said, “It is unreasonable to continue with elective orthopaedic surgery restrictions given the capacity in the system.

“The current restrictions are unfair and harmful to patients. Outcomes of surgery are being compromised because of the blunt approach being taken by the Victorian Government.

“The capacity in the system can be managed at a hospital level, that is sophisticated enough, and has the governance and administrative systems in place, to manage COVID risk,” Dr Trivett said.

AOA President Dr Annette Holian said an integrated solution to a staged return to surgery can be achieved for the benefit of thousands of patients.

“We acknowledge it is a complicated problem, that can be solved with a sophisticated solution, that is managed at a hospital level rather than the broad brush approach that is currently being enforced.

“AOA is calling on opening dialogue with the Victorian Government on this issue so we can better advocate for our patients in Victoria, some of whom are in great pain, and have had their planned surgeries cancelled due to the restrictions.

“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.

“Our solution involves hospitals and surgeons prioritising patients’ need 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 elective surgery ban. The surge in activity after the ban will heavily impact nursing and surgical staff with risks of burnout a real possibility,” added Dr Holian.

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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.