



MEDIA RELEASE

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CATHOLIC HOSPITALS WELCOME ELECTIVE SURGERY EXPANSION BUT CALL FOR MORE PPE TO PROTECT PATIENTS AND STAFF

Australia's largest grouping of not-for-profit health providers, Catholic Health Australia, welcomes the expansion of elective surgery but urges the Morrison Government to ramp up its efforts for a co-ordinated and systemic approach to managing the expected spike in demand for personal protective equipment (PPE).

Doctors and nurses in the Catholic hospital system are ready to take on more surgery cases to help clear the national backlog but they would feel more confident doing so knowing they had appropriate access to additional supplies of PPE.

Supplies of PPE in Catholic hospitals – and across the entire Health sector - are already tight and are expected to become tighter as the number of operations increases.

CHA Chief Executive Pat Garcia said: "We welcome the expansion of non-urgent elective surgery but our clinicians and staff would feel more secure if they knew they could get on with the job with the right level of protection.

"No one wants a situation like we have seen overseas where staff are forced to improvise or even reuse PPE sets because they know there are dwindling supplies. We cannot afford to have another spike in COVID infections and that's why we are calling on the Government to support a more coordinated and systemic approach to managing those stockpiles."

Mr Garcia said his members welcomed the expansion and would work closely with State and Territory governments to determine the speed with which they take on more surgery.

"We are still part of a national network of hospitals that stand ready to fight COVID-19 in the event of a spike in cases. Until this pandemic has been well and truly vanquished we must ensure our capacity is able to deal with that as well as undertake more elective surgery," Mr Garcia said.

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