



The Hon. Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 25 March 2020

ELECTIVE SURGERY

The National Cabinet is acting on the advice of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee that from 11.59pm (local time) on 25 March 2020, all non urgent elective surgery will be temporarily suspended. Only Category 1 and some exceptional Category 2 surgery will continue until further notice.

This will apply in both the public and private health systems.

The Commonwealth's Department of Health has ordered over 300 million additional masks with 30 million expected in the next two weeks, and one million surgical gowns are on order to build on Australia's stockpile of medical protective equipment. Australian manufacturers have also been engaged to ramp up local equipment production.

By cancelling certain elective surgeries, the National Cabinet is acting to preserve resources including protective equipment to help prepare public and private health services to prepare for their role in the COVID-19 outbreak.

Every patient waiting for elective surgery is assessed by their treating medical professional as Category 1, 2 or 3 per the following definitions:

- Category 1 – Needing treatment within 30 days. Has the potential to deteriorate quickly to the point where the patient's situation may become an emergency
- Category 2 – Needing treatment within 90 days. Their condition causes pain, dysfunction or disability. Unlikely to deteriorate quickly and unlikely to become an emergency
- Category 3 – Needing treatment at some point in the next year. Their condition causes pain, dysfunction or disability. Unlikely to deteriorate quickly.

Decisions on the category of patients are at the discretion of their treating medical professional.

Australia's health system will continue to ensure that any patient in need of urgent attention will receive treatment.

By taking these actions as well as the work to date to stop the spread of coronavirus, we can protect lives and we can save lives.

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