



Private hospitals ready to help clear Victoria's surgery backlog

Catholic Health Australia (CHA) has said the Victorian Coalition's plan to treat public patients in private hospitals would help get thousands of Victorians into surgery sooner.

The Coalition has committed \$1.27 billion to fund an extra 25,000 elective surgeries a year in private hospitals, under four-year contracts, if elected on 28 November.

"Victorians are waiting too long for surgery they need, while private hospitals have theatres and surgical teams that could be treating them," CHA Chief Executive Officer Tim Udorovic said.

"Putting that capacity to work gets patients treated sooner, supports private hospitals and takes pressure off public hospitals."

Around 68,000 Victorians were waiting for elective surgery in June, and the list has grown over the past year. That figure does not include patients on the "hidden waiting list" who are still waiting for a first specialist appointment before they can be put on the elective surgery waiting list.

The plan reflects [CHA's longstanding position](#), which calls for long-term partnerships between public and private hospitals to clear the elective surgery backlog.

Mr Udorovic also said the length of the contracts was critical.

"Short-term arrangements cost more and make it hard for hospitals to plan staff and theatre time. Four-year contracts give hospitals more certainty and give patients a program that will still be there next year."

Queensland's Surgery Connect program, which refers long-wait public patients to private hospitals, has already shown the model can be effective.

This approach could be adopted more widely across Australia, and the National Health Reform Agreement could reward states that get more patients treated sooner.

Notes to editors: Catholic Health Australia (CHA) is Australia's largest non-government, not-for-profit group of health, community, and aged care providers. Our members operate 80 hospitals in each Australian state and the ACT, providing around 30 per cent of private hospital care and 5 per cent of public hospital care, in addition to extensive community and residential aged care. There are 63 private hospitals operated by CHA members, including St Vincent's, Calvary, Mater, St John of God and Cabrini. CHA members also provide approximately 12 per cent of all aged care facilities across Australia, in addition to around 20 per cent of home care services. 25 per cent of our members' service provision is regional, rural and remote.

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