

Media Release

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College of Surgeons calls on governments to provide life-line to private hospitals

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) has called on federal and state governments to inject resources into the private hospital sector now, to prevent nursing stand-downs and hospital closures.

“We need to send out a life-line to private hospitals now, so they are ready and able to help when the full impact of COVID-19 hits,” said RACS President, Tony Sparnon.

Private hospitals have been hit hard by the cancellation of non-urgent elective surgery.

Without immediate government support, they report they may be forced to close their doors and stand down skilled health sector staff, including nurses.

RACS is calling on governments to support the wages of nurses in private hospitals, by transferring public non-deferrable category 1 and 2 cases to private hospitals when appropriate.

“Supporting the private sector now will save jobs and ensure all possible health sector resources are online when the full impact of COVID-19 seriously hits Australia,” Mr Sparnon said.

It would free up public beds and enable the private sector to continue to employ nurses who will be needed in a few weeks as the coronavirus spreads.

“All projections indicate we will soon need all hands-on deck to handle this pandemic,” Mr Sparnon said.

Injecting resources into private hospitals now will protect the health and safety of health professionals and create surge capacity in the system, ready for when we need it.

Ends.

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About the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS)

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery. www.surgeons.org