

MEDIA RELEASE:

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Members Health welcomes easing of restrictions on elective surgery

Members Health has welcomed today's announcement by the Prime Minister to relax restrictions on elective surgery, allowing important procedures including IVF, joint replacement and cataracts to restart after the Anzac Day weekend.

Matthew Koce, CEO of Members Health, said today's announcement marks the beginning of normalising general health care delivery across the country, for the more than 2.3 million people admitted for surgery each year.

"Many of the health conditions requiring elective surgery can be disabling, painful and life threatening," Mr Koce said.

"It is hugely important to Australians who might be suffering deeply debilitating pain with hips, or knees, or from other things like vision loss from cataracts."

Australia's health funds have always prided themselves on providing fast access to high quality care. Mr Koce said it has been pleasing to see doctors, hospitals, and health funds all working together with the Federal Government to successfully combat COVID-19 and get elective surgery back on track.

"Aside from the profound impact on quality of life, we know delays in elective surgery can have long term medical consequences," Mr Koce said.

"Dependence on opioid pain killers, complications, added complexity of surgery, longer recovery times and mental health issues being just a few."

Australia's mixed public and private health systems provides consumers with choice and is the best in the world when it comes to health outcomes. Around half the Australian population hold some form of health cover with over 40% of all procedures occurring in private hospitals, including 2 out of every 3 procedures involving elective surgery.

"We are therefore very pleased at today's announcement that COVID-19 restrictions on elective surgery will be eased," Mr Koce said. "It is especially pleasing to see procedures for children under 18 years of age among the elective surgeries that will come back into service from 27 April."

"Our health funds help care for over 3 million lives and look forward to providing peace of mind around access to the best possible treatment available for Australian families."

Members Health is the peak industry body for an alliance of 27 health funds that are not-for-profit or part of a not-for-profit group, member owned, regional and community based. They all share the common ethic of putting their members' health before profit. Our funds represent the interests of more than 3 million Australians.

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Putting members' health before profit

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