

The Australian and New Zealand Society of Cardiac and Thoracic Surgeons

ABN 44 503 186 462



26 March 2020

Dear Members,

Re: Elective Cardiac and Thoracic surgery procedures

Members of the Society should be aware the Federal Government today requested all non-urgent elective surgery – public and private - cease tomorrow. This is defined as surgery other than Category 1 or Urgent Category 2 procedures. The College has released a joint statement confirming this which is available at:

<https://www.surgeons.org/news/media-releases/2020-03-25-medical-colleges-call-for-urgent-freeze-to-all-non-critical-elective-surgery>

The Society wishes to advise members the standing recommendations for categorisation of elective cardiothoracic surgical cases published April 2015. This document – National Elective Surgery Urgency Categorisation - is available at:

<http://www.coaghealthcouncil.gov.au/Portals/0/National%20Elective%20Surgery%20Categorisation%20-%20Guideline%20-%20April%202015.pdf>.

The summarised categorisations are

Common Procedures	Usual Category
Congenital cardiac defect/s	2
Coronary Artery Grafting	2
Heart Valve Surgery	2
Lobectomy/Wedge/Pneumonectomy	1
Pleurodesis	2

It is important to recognise that the information above pertains to the Usual Category for a waiting list patient. Consideration in the decision-making process needs to be given to the prognostic implications of the coronary, valvular or other pathology. Clinical presentation, coronary anatomy, valvular pathology and ventricular dysfunction will impact on the appropriate timing of surgery.

It is recommended by the Society Executive all members consider these recommendations with regards elective cases in all hospitals. With likely resource limitations, and pressure on supply lines for simple protective equipment, we acknowledge that these decisions have not been made lightly.

We support members need to assess clinical urgency on any planned cases and manage as they believe are in the patient, and broader health system, interests within the advice and recommendations provided above.

Yours faithfully,

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