

Don't let theatres lie empty again, while New Zealanders wait in pain for surgery
– NZ Orthopaedic Association
14 August 2020

The New Zealand Orthopaedic Association (NZOA) is pleading with the Government to enable elective surgery to continue, as alert levels change with the re-emergence of COVID-19 community transmission.

NZOA President Peter Robertson says when the country was in level four earlier in the year, numbers of elective surgeries performed plummeted, even though hospitals did not have the expected influx of COVID-19 patients.

“Hospitals had operating theatres, surgeons and surgical teams ready and able to work on our large elective surgery backlog. Instead, many theatres remained empty, while New Zealanders continued to wait in pain and disability for elective surgery.”

He says we are currently in a situation of moving alert levels, and uncertainty about whether or not some or all parts of the country will go back into full lockdown.

“In the case of large numbers of COVID-19 patients, of course health services have to be prioritised. However, where public hospitals are half empty because – very thankfully – the expected influx hasn't happened, we need to take the opportunity to provide people with the surgery they have been waiting for and desperately need.

“The NZOA is asking the Government to continue to allow elective surgery to take place should we move to Level 4, if we are again in a situation where theatres and surgeons are available.”

For further information

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