

Appendix A:

Submissions and comments

We have consulted with the Department of Health, Alfred Health, Northern Health, Peninsula Health and St Vincent's Hospital and we considered their views when reaching our audit conclusions. As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, we gave a draft copy of this report, or relevant extracts, to those agencies and asked for their submissions and comments.

Responsibility for the accuracy, fairness and balance of those comments rests solely with the relevant agency head.

Responses received

Agency	Page
Department of Health	A-2
Peninsula Health	A-5



Secretary

Department of Health

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Mr Andrew Greaves
Auditor-General
Victorian Auditor-General's Office
Via e-mail: [REDACTED]

Dear Mr Greaves

VAGO Proposed Report: *Planned Surgery in Victoria*

Thank you for your letter of 8 July 2025 providing the Proposed Report for the *Planned Surgery in Victoria* performance audit.

I welcome the findings and recommendations in the Proposed Report Planned Surgery in Victoria). I am pleased to provide you with my department's actions in response to the audit report recommendations enclosed with this letter at **Attachment 1**.

The \$1.5 billion COVID Catch-Up Plan was essential in both reducing the backlog of surgical care that was deferred by the pandemic response and improving the state's surgery system, well after the Plan concluded. In addition to the achievements outlined in the Proposed Report, the following initiatives have been pivotal in enhancing the health system's capacity for long-term impact:

- **Appointing a Chief Surgical Adviser** to provide expertise and leadership on behalf of Victoria's surgical community.
- **Investing in surgical equipment and theatre upgrades** across 35 metropolitan and regional health services through the Surgical Equipment Innovation Fund, enabling greater theatre efficiency to support health services in delivering more surgeries.
- **Establishing Patient Support Units** in 23 health services to provide non-surgical treatment pathways and other interventions to optimise the health of patients before, during and after surgery. By October 2024, this initiative had supported over 28,000 patients. In 2025-26, Patient Support Units have been established at an additional five health services.
- **Increasing access to same-day surgeries**, which has saved over 10,000 bed days and \$33.2 million in bed day costs in 2023-24.

The Plan also laid the foundation for the [Planned Surgery Reform Blueprint](#) (the Blueprint), which was delivered in October 2023 and outlines the department's plan to continue improving planned surgery in Victoria. The 10 reforms identified in the Blueprint build on work that is already underway across the state, and will help to continue driving long-term, sustainable changes to planned surgery. This will mean more Victorians can access the care they need, when they need it.



As a result of the Plan's foundational work and Blueprint reforms, I am pleased to report that Victoria's health services have continued to increase the number of patients seen within clinically recommended time and deliver record numbers of surgery year on year. In 2024-25, Victoria has once again exceeded the admissions target of 210,000 surgeries.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Victorian health services for their continued commitment and enthusiasm to improving the planned surgery system and delivering high quality care to all Victorians. I also thank your staff for their collaborative approach to this audit alongside my department.

Should further information be required, please contact Aleco Lazaridis, Executive Director, Planned Care Recovery and Reform via email at [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely



Jenny Atta PSM

Secretary

21/07/2025

Attachment 1: Department of Health action plan: *Planned Surgery in Victoria*

Department of Health action plan to address recommendations from *Planned surgery in Victoria*

No.	VAGO recommendation	Acceptance	Agreed management actions	Target completion date
1	The Department of Health work with relevant health services to ensure all public planned surgeries delivered in Victoria is captured in the Elective Surgery Information System (ESIS).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In part <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In principle	Since the completion of the COVID Catch-up Plan, the ESIS Expansion Project, led by the department, has already resulted in additional reporting health services reporting to ESIS. One health service commenced reporting in 2024-25, with a further seven sites commencing in 2025-26. This expansion will bring the total coverage of public planned surgery activity from 87% to over 90%. The department agrees in principle to bring all public planned surgery and procedural activity into ESIS to achieve 100% coverage over the coming years, noting implementation is contingent on government policy and funding decisions.	1 July 2025
2	The Department of Health actively monitor the status of the March 2022 long waiter cohort patients and work with health services to ensure patients ready for surgery are treated as soon as practicable.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In part <input type="checkbox"/> In principle	The department continues to work with health services to identify the reasons for delay for the March 2022 long waiter cohort and plan to provide the appropriate care to the long waiting patients.	30 June 2026

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21 July 2025

Mr Andrew Greaves
Auditor-General
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Dear Mr Greaves

Proposed Report: Planned Surgery in Victoria

Thank you for your letter of 8 July 2025 providing Peninsula Health with the opportunity to comment on the proposed report Planned Surgery in Victoria.

Peninsula Health welcomes the findings and note there are no recommendations for Peninsula Health. Furthermore, Peninsula Health would like to elaborate regarding the commentary on page 6 and 14 regarding the modelling used to determine the targets. Peninsula Health confirms that they worked closely with the department on the modelling to develop the proposal and in setting targets, however, did not adequately consider the variables as listed in the findings when determining the targets.

Peninsula Health would like to take the opportunity to provide an update on the Frankston Public Surgical Centre (FPSC) activity for 24-25 (page 17). Peninsula Health has considerably improved activity performance at FPSC in the 4th quarter and exceeded the 4th quarter target overall achieving 7,322 against a target of 7,425.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank VAGO for the way in which the audit was conducted and feel the report presents the information we have provided fairly and accurately.

Yours sincerely



Jana Gazarek
Acting Chief Executive

Copied to: [Redacted]