

CONSTITUENT QUESTION

House of Assembly

ASKED BY: Cecily Rosol MP

ANSWERED BY: Hon Bridget Archer MP
Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing

QUESTION:

My question is on behalf of my constituent Scott. Scott has had chemotherapy and radiation for bowel cancer; this reduced the tumour size so it could be removed. He should have had the follow-up surgery within 10 weeks of the end of radiation. It's now 13 weeks since radiation finished and Scott's surgery has been cancelled three times, twice for administrative reasons and once due to lack of staff in ICU, which he needs for post-operative care. He is stressed and worried about his next surgery date. As well as this, he was transferred from one Holman Clinic caseworker to another and has not been contacted since. He is missing the care he previously received. Scott also told me this morning he is devastated the stadium will be approved while he isn't even sure if his surgery will go ahead. Scott asks why lack of staff has been allowed to prevent his time-critical surgery and why have you prioritised a stadium over staffing to enable his essential surgery.

ANSWER:

1. Surgery cancellations are avoided wherever possible but unfortunately can occur for several reasons.
2. At times of peak emergency medical and surgical patient demand, the hospital may have to postpone or reschedule elective or planned surgeries as needed, based on clinical and emergency priority.

3. If scheduled patient surgeries or procedures are more complex than expected, or unplanned complications occur during surgery, this can lead to delays for other patients who are due to have surgery on the same day.
4. There are also rare instances where a surgeon has unplanned or sick leave at short notice, meaning it may be less likely that an appropriately skilled surgeon who is familiar with the patient can be sought.
5. Clinicians do all they can to accommodate patients planned for surgery, and when procedures do need to be rescheduled this is done so as soon as possible. Every effort is made to ensure patient safety and risk mitigation when deciding to postpone any elective surgery.
6. To provide a specific explanation for the reasons for Scott's cancelled surgery, I am happy to request the Tasmanian Health Service investigates his circumstances. To ensure the privacy of information and in accordance with the Personal Information Protection Act 2004 (PIP Act) a consent form must be obtained for the release of patient information to any third parties, including myself and my office.



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Date: 23 December 2025