

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee
Inquiry into the 2026-27 Budget Estimates

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Portfolio: Health

Hearing: Thursday 21 May 2026, 8:30 am – 10:45 am

Witnesses

Jenny Atta	Secretary, Department of Health
Catherine Rooney	Deputy Secretary, Budget Finance and Investment, Department of Health
Naomi Bromley	Deputy Secretary, Health System Reform and Partnerships, Department of Health
Ryan Phillips	Deputy Secretary, Corporate Strategy and Operations, Department of Health
Siva Sivarajah	Chief Executive Officer, Hospitals Victoria, Department of Health
Kym Arthur	A/Deputy Secretary, Community and Public Health, Department of Health
Louise McKinlay	Chief Executive Officer, Safer Care Victoria
Katherine Whetton	Deputy Secretary, eHealth, Department of Health

Legend

All questions are in **red text**.

The responses to the questions, including source details **black text**.

PAEC Inquiry into the 2025-26 Budget Estimates

QUESTION: How many patients were removed from the elective surgery waitlist because they died before getting surgery?

SOURCE: Health PAEC transcript, proof version, page 10

COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION: Jade BENHAM

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Responsible Division/Agency: Department of Health

RESPONSE

States and Territories report the number of people removed from surgery waiting lists to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) as part of a broader category which captures patients deemed uncontactable.

The death of a patient on a planned surgery waiting list is not an indication that a delay in treatment was a contributing factor in their death. These figures will include people who have passed away from unrelated illness, road trauma, old age or for other reasons including pre-existing terminal diagnoses.

In Victoria, all patient deaths that may have been preventable are assessed on a case-by-case basis and referred to Safer Care Victoria for further investigation and review where appropriate.

QUESTION: How many of the recommendations (of the *Health Services Plan*) remain outstanding to be implemented?

SOURCE: Health PAEC transcript, proof version, page 11

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RESPONSE

26 of the 27 recommendations of the Health Services Plan (the Plan) have or are currently being implemented. A key recommendation of the Plan was the establishment of Local Health Service Networks, which occurred on 1 July 2025. Local Health Service Networks are continuing to prioritise improved access to care through the delivery of Clinical Service Plans to support coordinated service delivery and care closer to home.

The Government did not accept Recommendation 7.1 relating to the direct consolidation of health services.

QUESTION: A key component of that *Health Services Plan* was the formalised linkages between the regional and tertiary metro centres. Has this been formalised, and if not, how many remain outstanding, and when will they be completed?

SOURCE: Health PAEC transcript, proof version, page 12

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RESPONSE

The department is progressing formalised relationships between each regional and metropolitan Local Health Service Network with a major tertiary, women's and children's hospital. These relationships are designed to support clearer service pathways and strengthen collaboration between hospitals consistent with the *Health Services Plan*. The department is implementing the relationships in stages to support thorough consultation and clinical engagement, ensuring these relationships reflect best practice and meet the needs of our health system.

QUESTION: How many code grey and code black incidents have been reported for the current financial year in Victorian public health services?

SOURCE: Health PAEC transcript, proof version, page 13

COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION: Jade BENHAM

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RESPONSE

Health services monitor and manage their code greys and blacks, and the data is held at a health service level.

QUESTION: Didn't Royal Melbourne have a code yellow? I am sure they have had a yellow code recently. When was that?

SOURCE: Health PAEC transcript, proof version, page 13

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RESPONSE

A code yellow can be planned or unplanned and can relate to demand, ICT or infrastructure.

The Royal Melbourne Hospital (RMH) did not activate an unplanned demand related code yellow in 25/26.

The most recent unplanned ICT Code Yellow was activated by RMH on 11 September 2025, involving a technical issue affecting information flow between clinical applications. The incident lasted approximately four hours. RMH implemented business continuity arrangements to maintain patient care throughout the incident.