Critical Operating Theatre Missing in New Royal Adelaide Hospital

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The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) has warned that the new Royal Adelaide Hospital is in danger of being out dated before it even opens its doors, unless a decision to abandon the construction of a specialist operating theatre is overturned.

The theatre, known as a hybrid suite, is a combined operating room used to perform complex and often lifesaving surgery in vascular, neurosurgical and cardiothoracic cases.

Despite previous advice from the College on its importance, the latest building plans released by the Department of Health, do not include provision for the suite as part of the hospital’s design.

Dr Sonja Latzel, Chair of the RACS South Australian Regional Committee, said that since being made aware of the decision, the College had been approached by a number of surgeons expressing concern.

“The feedback that we are getting from various specialities of surgery is that this will significantly hinder the ability of surgeons to provide a high level of patient care.

“The fact that we will soon have a brand new hospital, but there will still be nowhere in this state where patients can access such an important facility, is something that we find very troubling,” Dr Latzel said.

“We had previously been working to the expectation that the suite would be included in the build of the new hospital and have consistently raised its significance with the Department of Health.”

Despite the setback, Dr Latzel said that RACS was committed to working with the government to resolve the issue and to ensure that a practical solution was reached.

“I will be writing to the Minister to outline our concerns, and I will also be taking it up further when I meet with him next week.

“The government has expressed its commitment to providing the ‘best care, first time, every time’ and it is certainly in the state’s interests that they abide by these principles on this occasion,” Dr Latzel said.