



The state of our public hospitals, June 2007 report

OVERVIEW

- In 2005–06, there were 755 **public hospitals** in Australia with 54,601 available beds.
- There were about 2.6 beds per 1,000 weighted population.
- Under the 2003–08 **Australian Health Care Agreements**, the Australian Government provides funding to the states and territories to assist them to provide free public hospital services for public patients. The Australian Government will provide an estimated \$42 billion to the states and territories over the life of the agreements. It provided \$8.32 billion in 2005–06.

ADMISSIONS

- There were about 4.5 million patient admissions to **public hospitals** in 2005–06. This is an increase of over 4.4 per cent from the previous year, which is higher than Australia's population growth during this time. (1.3 per cent). There were almost 210 admissions per 1,000 weighted population in 2005–06, compared to almost 205 in 2004–05.
- There were over 3.8 million **public patient** admissions to public hospitals (87 per cent of all admissions). There were over 400,000 **private patient** admissions to public hospitals (9 per cent). The remaining over 180,000 patient admissions (4 per cent) included patients whose care is funded under Department of Veterans' Affairs arrangements, as well as patients whose care is funded under compensation arrangements.
- About 65 per cent of public hospital admissions were for **acute medical care** and 6 per cent for **acute medical procedures**. 18 per cent were admitted for **surgery** and 8 per cent were admitted for **maternity services**. The remaining 3 per cent were admitted for **non-acute services** such as palliative care.
- About 50 per cent of all public hospital admissions were discharged on the **same day**, an increase from 45 per cent in 1998–99.
- The national **average length of stay** for overnight patients was 6.6 days, a decrease from 1998–99.

The top five medical and obstetric conditions resulting in the highest number of days that patients spent in public hospitals in 2005–06 were:

Cardiology and interventional cardiology (317,707 admissions resulting in 1,024,527 days)

Respiratory problems (206,933 admissions resulting in 991,808 days)

Obstetrics (307,351 admissions resulting in 875,863 days)

Renal dialysis (725,927 admissions resulting in 726,212 days)

Neurology (143,243 admissions resulting in 612,670 days).

The top five areas of surgery resulting in the highest number of days that patients spent in public hospitals in 2005–06 were:

Orthopaedics (253,429 admissions resulting in 1,029,840 days)

Neurosurgery (70,417 admissions resulting in 427,578 days)

Vascular surgery (40,112 admissions resulting in 302,658 days)

Upper gastrointestinal surgery (62,376 admissions resulting in 271,539 days)

Urology (119,431 admissions resulting in 262,782 days).

- More than 556,000 patients underwent some form of elective surgery procedure as public patients, with a median waiting time of 32 days. 81 per cent of these were seen within the time recommended for their procedure.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS

- About 4.8 million people presented to emergency departments in larger Australian public hospitals. Of these, 1 per cent required resuscitation, 8 per cent were emergencies, 79 per cent were urgent or semi-urgent, and 12 per cent were non-urgent.
- There were 69 per cent of people seen within the time recommended for their triage category. Half of these patients were seen within 24 minutes.
- Emergency department performance varied for different triage categories:
 - Category 1 Resuscitation — 99.5 per cent of patients were seen immediately
 - Category 2 Emergency — 77 per cent of patients were seen within 10 minutes
 - Category 3 Urgent — 64 per cent of patients were seen within 30 minutes
 - Category 4 Semi-urgent — 65 per cent of patients were seen within one hour
 - Category 5 Non-urgent — 87 per cent of patients were seen within two hours.
- Twenty-nine per cent of people who presented to an emergency department were subsequently admitted to hospital.