

Outcome 13

Acute Care

Australians have access to public hospitals and related hospital care underpinned by appropriate medical indemnity arrangements

OUTCOME SUMMARY

Outcome 13 aims to provide all Australians with access to cost-effective and high quality health care services. This outcome is also focused on a safe supply of blood and blood-related products and supporting doctors providing private medical services.

The Australian Government will achieve this outcome through financial contributions to the states and territories for public hospital care and funding to the National Blood Authority. The Government will also invest in medical indemnity programs.

Outcome 13 is the responsibility of the Acute Care Division.

The Year Ahead

In 2007-08, the Australian Government will continue to support acute care for all Australians through the provision of free public hospital services, and the safe supply of blood and blood-related products. The Government will also seek to improve the rate of organ and tissue donation.

Key Strategic Directions for 2007-08

During 2007-08, the Australian Government will:

- continue to work with the states and territories to support the provision of free public hospital services through the Australian Health Care Agreements;
- collaborate with the states and territories to ensure the safe supply of blood and blood-related products under the national blood arrangements and provide policy advice on blood issues;
- work to achieve a long-term and sustainable increase in organ and tissue donation rates in Australia; and
- improve the scope and quality of acute care information, particularly for non-admitted public hospital services.

Major Activities

Australian Health Care Agreements

The Australian Government will provide up to \$42 billion over five years to State and Territory governments through the 2003-08 Australian Health Care Agreements to help meet the costs of running public hospitals.

Public hospitals provide many health services to the Australian community, such as accident and emergency services, intensive care, surgical procedures, and outpatient services. In 2007-08, the Australian Government will consider future arrangements for funding public hospitals and the outcomes it wants to achieve after the current agreements end in June 2008. A focus will be on improving accountability.

The Department will work with the states and territories to ensure they meet their obligations under the current agreements; in particular, that they continue to provide free and clinically appropriate public hospital services to all Australians.

Blood and Blood-Related Products

In 2007-08, the Australian Government will continue to ensure that the supply of blood and blood-related products is maintained for the Australian community, by contributing 63 per cent of all funding required under the National Blood Agreement.

The Australian Government will also work with State and Territory governments, through the Jurisdictional Blood Committee, to develop a workplan to be endorsed by Health Ministers for responding to the recommendations from the Plasma Fractionation Review Report. The Department will continue to chair the Jurisdictional Blood Committee and provide policy advice to the Minister for Health and Ageing on blood issues.

In 2007-08, the Department will contribute to the conduct of the independent Business Study on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Australian Red Cross Blood Service through its representation on the Expert Advisory Committee established to oversee the study.

In addition, the Government will contribute to improving fresh blood safety standards through the implementation of universal pre-release bacterial testing for platelets and the move to universal leucodepletion by 2010-11. The Department will continue to contribute to the finalisation of the new criteria for Intravenous Immunoglobulin use in Australia.

Organ and Tissue Donation

In 2007-08, the Government will continue to implement the National Reform Agenda on Organ and Tissue Donation, to increase the number of organs and tissues available for transplantation. The Department will work collaboratively with states and territories in developing a range of initiatives to improve Australia's donation rate and commence work on a national regulatory framework for human tissues and emerging biological technologies.

Furthermore, the Department will provide secretariat support to the National Clinical Taskforce on Organ and Tissue Donation and implement a range of strategies as part of the National Reform Agenda to improve Australia's donation rate, donation and allocation processes, data collection and reporting.

The Department will also work with key stakeholders to undertake and disseminate the results of empirical research on how to change attitudes and behaviour relating to organ and tissue donation, to support increased rates of registration and consent.

Improved Hospital and Performance Information

The Australian Government is committed to the development of a comprehensive framework of performance indicators to measure the effectiveness, efficiency, quality, safety, accessibility and equity of public hospital services.

To achieve this, the Department will continue to work with State and Territory governments on improving the quality of the National Minimum Data Sets for admitted patients, emergency departments, outpatients and rehabilitation/step-down care. Other key activities will include working towards the development of improved costing methods and tools, and maintaining ongoing services to the private hospital and the private health insurance industries.

The Government will report on performance information collected under the Australian Health Care Agreements in the annual *State of Our Public Hospitals Reports*.

Outcome 13 Resourcing

Table 3.1.13 shows how the 2007-08 Budget appropriations translate to total resourcing for Outcome 13, including administered expenses, revenue from government (appropriation), revenue from other sources, and the total price of outputs.

Table 3.1.13: Total Resources for Outcome 13

	Estimated actual 2006-07 \$'000	Budget estimate 2007-08 \$'000
Administered appropriations		
Program 13.1: Blood and Organ Donation Services		
Appropriation Bill 1	15,491	13,992
Appropriation Bill 2 <i>National Blood Authority Act 2003</i> to National Blood Authority	6,984	10,613
	407,520	428,751
Total Special Appropriations	407,520	428,751
	429,995	453,356
Program 13.2: Medical Indemnity		
<i>Medical Indemnity Act 2002</i>	53,300	127,543
Total Special Appropriations	53,300	127,543
	53,300	127,543
Program 13.3: Public Hospitals and Information		
Appropriation Bill 2	37,500	37,500
<i>Health Care (Appropriation) Act 1998</i> - Australian Health Care Agreements - Provision of Designated Health (p)	8,788,757	9,246,485
Total Special Appropriations	8,788,757	9,246,485
	8,826,257	9,283,985
Total Administered Appropriations	9,309,552	9,864,884
Departmental appropriations		
Health and Ageing		
Output Group 1 - Policy Advice	17,505	16,097
Output Group 2 - Program Management	8,839	8,128
Total price of departmental outputs <i>(Total revenue from government and from other sources)</i>	26,344	24,225
Total revenue from government (appropriations) contributing to price of departmental outputs	25,287	23,199
Total revenue from other sources	1,057	1,026
Total price of departmental outputs <i>(Total revenue from government and from other sources)</i>	26,344	24,225
Total Price of Outputs for Outcome 13 <i>(Total Revenue from Government and from other sources)</i>	26,344	24,225
Total estimated resourcing for Outcome 13 <i>(Total price of outputs and administered appropriations)</i>	9,335,896	9,889,109
	2006-07	2007-08
Average Staffing Level (number)		
Department	165	158

Measures Affecting Outcome 13

A summary of measures affecting this outcome is provided at Table 2.2, Section 2. Measure descriptions are published in full in *Budget Paper No. 2, Budget Measures 2007-08*, available on the Australian Government website at: <www.budget.gov.au>.

Contribution of Administered Programs to Outcome 13

Program 13.1: Blood and Organ Donation Services

The Blood and Organ Donation Services program provides funding to the National Blood Authority under the National Blood Agreement, and to State and Territory governments under the Hepatitis C Litigation Settlement Scheme. The program also supports Australian patients under the Bone Marrow Transplant Program, and key community and non-government organisations in the organ donation sector. The contribution to this outcome is measured by the performance of the National Blood Authority in meeting product demand through effective planning and by management of supply arrangements with product suppliers such as the Australian Red Cross Blood Service. It is also managed by the annual organ and tissue donation rate per million population.

Program 13.2: Medical Indemnity

The Medical Indemnity program funds the Incurred-But-Not-Reported Scheme, the Run-Off Cover Scheme, the High Cost Claims Scheme, the Exceptional Claims Scheme and the Premium Support Scheme, to ensure doctors have access to fair, affordable and secure medical indemnity insurance. These schemes are designed to put downward pressure on premiums. The contribution to this outcome can be gauged by the number of doctors participating in the Premium Support Scheme – a reduction in participating doctors is broadly indicative of premiums becoming more affordable. In addition, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission undertakes periodic reviews of medical indemnity insurance premiums.

Program 13.3: Public Hospitals and Information

The Public Hospitals and Information program incorporates the Australian Health Care Agreements 2003-08 which provide funding to State and Territory governments to support the provision of free public hospital services to public patients. The contribution to this outcome is measured by data and information about the level of services for admitted and non-admitted patients, as well as the timeliness of service provision across all states and territories.

As part of the Agreements, the Hospital Information and Performance Information program funds development of national classification systems for patients, their treatment and associated costs. These systems provide a basis for measuring and paying for hospital services. The contribution to this outcome is measured by the quality and timeliness of major data collections, reports and classification system developments. Annual revision of the Australian Refined Diagnosis Related Groups classification and additions to national data collections for emergency departments and outpatient services, are also undertaken.

Contribution of Departmental Outputs to Outcome 13

The Department describes its core activities in terms of two output groups: policy advice and program management. Outcome 13 reports on both output groups. Refer to Section 3.1 for more information on output groups.

Performance Information for Outcome 13

Performance information for administered programs, individual outputs and output groups relating to Outcome 13 are summarised in Table 3.2.13.

Table 3.2.13: Key Performance Information for Outcome 13

Performance Information for Administered Programs

Indicator	Measured by	Reference Point or Target
Administered Funding – Acute Care Programs		
Access to free public hospital emergency services.	Number of public emergency department patients per 1,000 weighted population.	The same or increase on previous year.
Timely treatment of public emergency department patients.	Proportion of public emergency department patients seen within the recommended timeframe.	Increased proportion across each state and territory.
Timely public admission of people for elective surgery.	Proportion of public patients admitted for elective surgery within the clinically appropriate timeframe.	Increased proportion across each state and territory.
Reduction in the number of doctors requiring support under the Premium Support Scheme.	Number of doctors participating in the Premium Support Scheme.	Reduction in number of participating doctors.
Increased rate of organ donations.	Rate of organ and tissue donations.	Increase on previous year.
Accurate costing and reporting of hospital activity.	Maintenance of the Australian Refined Diagnosis Related Groups classification and National Hospital Cost and benchmarking data.	National hospital cost data collection round 10 reported by August 2007.
Cost: \$9,864.884m		

Performance Information for Departmental Outputs

Indicator	Measured by	Reference Point or Target
Output Group 1 – Policy Advice		
Quality, relevant and timely advice for Australian Government decision-making.	Ministerial satisfaction.	Maintain or increase from previous year.
Relevant and timely evidence-based policy research.	Production of relevant and timely evidence-based policy research.	Relevant evidence-based policy research produced in a timely manner.
Price: \$16.097m		

Indicator	Measured by	Reference Point or Target
Output Group 2 – Program Management		
Administered budget predictions are met and actual expenses vary less than 0.5% from budgeted expenses.	Percentage that actual expenses vary from budgeted expenses.	0.5% variance from budgeted expenses.
Stakeholders to participate in program development.	Opportunities for stakeholder participation through a range of avenues, such as surveys, conferences and meetings.	Stakeholders participated in program development.
Price: \$8.128m		

Evaluations

The Department does not plan to undertake any evaluations under Outcome 13 in 2007-08.

Major Reviews**Hospital Information and Performance Information Program**

In 2007-08, the Department will complete a review of the Hospital Information and Performance Information Program. The review will provide an assessment of the program's performance over time and will include stakeholder views on the program's data development, refinement and reporting outcomes. It will also map out a long-term strategy for the program including the future directions of health care data and the infrastructure required to support this.

Other Performance Improvement Initiatives

Australian Health Care Agreements

Under the 2003-08 Australian Health Care Agreements, the Australian Government will continue to work with all states and territories to better measure services for non-admitted patients, including emergency department, outpatient and rehabilitation services.

The Government will progressively implement performance indicators for rehabilitation and geriatric evaluation management. Work will also continue on expanding a national set of performance indicators to more fully measure the safety, quality, equity and efficiency of all key hospital services.