Elective Surgery Waiting List Reduction Plan
Report for period April to June 2009

Australian Capital Territory Report

On 20 December 2007, COAG announced that the Commonwealth will provide $150 million to the States and Territories in 2008 for an immediate national blitz on waiting lists. The aim of this Plan is that by the end of four years the backlog of patients waiting longer than clinically recommended for elective surgery will be dramatically reduced across Australia.

The Australian Government will provide up to $600 million over four years for the Elective Surgery Waiting List Reduction Plan. The four year Plan includes three stages:

1. $150 million to conduct an immediate national blitz, to help dramatically reduce the backlog of patients waiting longer than clinically recommended for elective surgery
2. $150 million to make systemic improvements to the hospital system and improve elective surgery throughput in the long term
3. Up to $300 million in dividend payments to States and Territories that dramatically increase the number of elective surgeries completed within the clinically recommended time by the end of the four year plan.

More information on the Elective Surgery Waiting List Reduction Plan can be viewed at www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/elective.

Under Stage One of the Plan, the ACT Government received $2.5 million from the Australian Government to provide an additional 250 elective surgery procedures. These additional procedures will be delivered on top of the nearly $49 million this government has funded since 2003-04. Funding for Stage One is targeted at patients who have been waiting longer than clinically recommended for elective surgery, ie long waits.

This project will focus on the ACT's elective surgery waiting list currently maintained within ACT public hospital system (i.e. The Canberra Hospital and Calvary Public Hospital). The list includes both ACT and NSW residents. The ACT will provide treatment to a significant number of people who have been waiting longer than 365 days. At 30 June 2009, there were 586 people with waiting times of greater than 12 months, which is 24% fewer than the 768 people waiting longer than the same time last year and 46% below the 1085 reported four years ago.

However at the same time, our public hospitals have been able to ensure that the majority of patients with the most urgent elective surgery needs (mainly cancer and major heart surgery) are treated.

Under the Commonwealth's Elective Surgery Reduction Plan, ACT Health is also constructing an additional three operating theatres at our public hospitals. One of these at Calvary Public Hospital is already up and running, with the other two currently being constructed at TCH (and expected to be ready for surgery in October 2009).

While the building of the theatres has been funded by the Commonwealth, the ACT Government will fund the additional elective and emergency surgery activity that will be possible given the increase in operating room capacity.

ACT Elective Surgery Information

Table 1: Number of Patients Removed from Waiting List for Admission by Indicator Procedure (April to June 2009) – preliminary

Number of patients removed from waiting list for admission Quarter 4, 2008-2009			
Indicator procedure	**TCH**	**Calvary**	**Total ACT Public Hospital**
1 Cataract extraction	0	308	308
2 Cholecystectomy	23	35	58
3 Coronary artery bypass graft	31	0	31
4 Cystoscopy	125	89	214
5 Haemorrhoidectomy	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.
6 Hysterectomy	15	15	30
7 Inguinal herniorrhaphy	32	32	64
8 Myringoplasty	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.
9 Myringotomy	12	29	41
10 Prostatectomy	n.p.	n.p.	24
11 Septoplasty	17	26	43
12 Tonsillectomy	57	32	89
13 Total hip replacement	13	40	53
14 Total knee replacement	13	35	48
15 Varicose veins strip & ligate	n.p.	n.p.	30
16 Not applicable	966	514	1480
Total	**1353**	**1175**	**2528**

n.p. not published

Table 1 above shows the number of patients removed from the ACT waiting list for admission for surgery for the period. April to June 2009. The quarter 4 result for 2008-09 is 2,528 patients admitted for surgery, down from 2540 in the same quarter in 2007-08. ACT Public Hospitals provided 10,107 elective surgery operations in 2008-09, another record level of access to elective surgery in the ACT. This is 512 more people who have received elective surgery than the 9,595 recorded in 2007-08.

Table 2: Median Waiting Time for Indicator Procedures and Urgency Category (April to June 2009) – preliminary

Median waiting time for the 15 indicator procedures and urgency category Quarter 4, 2008-2009			
	Median waiting time (days)		
Indicator procedure	The Canberra Hospital	Calvary Public Hospital	Total ACT Public Hospitals
1 Cataract extraction	0	115	115
2 Cholecystectomy	76	93	84
3 Coronary artery bypass graft	7	0	7
4 Cystoscopy	97	81	84
5 Haemorrhoidectomy	.	70	70
6 Hysterectomy	141	83	96
7 Inguinal herniorrhaphy	85	88	87
8 Myringoplasty	347	0	352
9 Myringotomy	108	178	150
10 Prostatectomy	42	594	54
11 Septoplasty	188	677	587
12 Tonsillectomy	352	366	357
13 Total hip replacement	116	217	190
14 Total knee replacement	336	247	295
15 Varicose veins strip & ligate	216	377	260
16 Not applicable	34	67	43
Total	**50**	**99**	**78**
Urgency category			
Category 1: Admission within 30 days	14	15	14
Category 2: Admission within 90 days	104	105	105
Category 3: Admission at some time in the future	259	160	182
Total	**50**	**99**	**78**

Table 2 above shows that median waiting time statistics (50th percentile) from the waiting list for elective surgery, by indicator procedures for the period April to June 2009. Waiting times at admission for elective surgery by Categories 1, 2 and 3 at the 50th percentile is also reported in Table 2.

Additional information on elective surgery can be found in the ACT Health Public Services Performance report, a comprehensive quarterly report published on the ACT Health website at www.health.act.gov.au/reports

Table 3: Number of Patients Waiting by Urgency Category and by Surgical Speciality (April to June 2009) – preliminary

Number of patients waiting by urgency category and by surgical speciality Quarter 4, 2008-09						
	Category 1		Category 2		Cateogry 3	
Surgical speciality	**waiting**	**overdue**	**waiting**	**overdue**	**waiting**	**overdue**
Cardiothoracic surgery	n.p.		16	n.p.		
Ear, nose and throat surgery	n.p.		431	277	530	120
General surgery	25		280	121	99	10
Gynaecology	12		166	30	149	13
Neurosurgery	n.p.		102	37		
Ophthalmology	n.p.		68	23	507	50
Orthopaedic surgery	16		889	545	304	89
Plastic surgery	n.p.		209	107	68	18
Urology	14		434	202	162	28
Vascular surgery	10		29	13	110	
Other	16		148	46	94	n.p.
Total	**111**	**0**	**2772**	**1405**	**2023**	**332**

n.p. not published

The ACT Government also reports surgeon waiting times and operating sessions for ACT's public hospitals. This web page provides information on average waiting times for elective surgery for either a particular doctor or a clinical speciality. The web page shows the number of operating sessions a doctor has at either of the two public hospitals in the ACT. This information can be found in ACT Health's webpage at www.health.act.gov.au/waitinglists.

Note: The data in this Report is preliminary.