Elective Surgery Waiting List Reduction Plan
Report for period July to September 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 September 2009, there were 606 people with waiting times of greater than 12 months, which is 14% fewer than the 707 people waiting longer than the same time last year and 74% below the 1055 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 has 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 (July to September 2009) – preliminary

Number of patients removed from waiting list for admission Quarter 1, 2009-2010			
Indicator procedure	**TCH**	**Calvary**	**Total ACT Public Hospital**
1 Cataract extraction	n.p.	289	291
2 Cholecystectomy	24	46	70
3 Coronary artery bypass graft	n.p.	n.p	35
4 Cystoscopy	62	60	122
5 Haemorrhoidectomy	n.p.	n.p.	0
6 Hysterectomy	15	15	30
7 Inguinal herniorrhaphy	39	24	63
8 Myringoplasty	n.p.	n.p.	0
9 Myringotomy	17	18	35
10 Prostatectomy	12	n.p.	0
11 Septoplasty	19	19	38
12 Tonsillectomy	45	19	64
13 Total hip replacement	20	36	56
14 Total knee replacement	n.p.	49	0
15 Varicose veins strip & ligate	14	10	24
16 Not applicable	1046	498	1544
Total	1361	1092	2453

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. July to September 2009. The quarter 1 result for 2009-10 is 2,453 patients admitted for surgery, down from 2,718 in the same quarter in 2008-09. 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 (July to September 2009) – preliminary

Median waiting time for the 15 indicator procedures and urgency category Quarter 1, 2009-2010			
	Median waiting time (days)		
Indicator procedure	The Canberra Hospital	Calvary Public Hospital	Total ACT Public Hospitals
1 Cataract extraction	141	140	140
2 Cholecystectomy	35	73	54
3 Coronary artery bypass graft	15	.	15
4 Cystoscopy	71	107	73
5 Haemorrhoidectomy	83	231	157
6 Hysterectomy	50	82	74
7 Inguinal herniorrhaphy	86	109	93
8 Myringoplasty	422	453	438
9 Myringotomy	267	159	174
10 Prostatectomy	53	649	83
11 Septoplasty	177	543	381
12 Tonsillectomy	291	380	311
13 Total hip replacement	199	167	167
14 Total knee replacement	417	350	369
15 Varicose veins strip & ligate	141	281	192
16 Not applicable	33	49	37
Total	41	100	66
Urgency category			
Category 1: Admission within 30 days	12	17	14
Category 2: Admission within 90 days	92	110	99
Category 3: Admission at some time in the future	221	160	177
Total	41	100	66

Table 2 above shows that median waiting time statistics (50th percentile) from the waiting list for elective surgery, by indicator procedures for the period July to September 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 (July to September 2009) – preliminary

Number of patients waiting by urgency category and by surgical speciality Quarter 1, 2009-10						
	Category 1		Category 2		Cateogry 3	
Surgical speciality	**waiting**	**overdue**	**waiting**	**overdue**	**waiting**	**overdue**
Cardiothoracic surgery	8		23	n.p.		
Ear, nose and throat surgery	5		431	269	534	140
General surgery	31		276	123	108	9
Gynaecology	15		192	63	156	12
Neurosurgery	n.p.		106	62	n.p.	
Ophthalmology	n.p.		52	19	518	18
Orthopaedic surgery	16		893	583	286	95
Plastic surgery	n.p.		200	117	54	11
Urology	33		583	331	149	33
Vascular surgery	14	n.p.	39	24	134	n.p.
Other	21	n.p.	184	68	112	n.p.
Total	**156**	**n.p.**	**2979**	**1665**	**2053**	**324**

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.