Elective Surgery Waiting List Reduction Plan
Report for period July to September 2010

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, also called “long waits”.

This project will focus on the ACT’s elective surgery waiting list currently maintained within the ACT public hospital system (i.e. 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 2010, there were 798 people with waiting times of greater than 12 months, which is an increase on the 606 people waiting longer than the same time last year, however it is a 16% decrease on the 950 people reported in December 2007.

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 constructed an additional three operating theatres at our public hospitals. 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.

To improve access to elective surgery, the Commonwealth and the ACT Government have entered into a partnership to significantly increase the number of elective surgery operations provided in our public hospitals each year and reduce the number of people waiting more than clinically recommended times for that surgery.

As part of this program, the Commonwealth and ACT Government have committed to add funds to the ACT Health budget to be spent specifically to increase access to surgery over the next four years.

ACT Elective Surgery Information

Table 1: Number of Patients Removed from Waiting List for Admission by Indicator Procedure (July to September 2010) – preliminary

Number of patients removed from waiting list for admission Quarter 1, 2010-2011			
Indicator procedure	**TCH**	**Calvary**	**Total ACT Public Hospital**
1 Cataract extraction	np	257	260
2 Cholecystectomy	32	31	63
3 Coronary artery bypass graft	17	0	17
4 Cystoscopy	96	159	255
5 Haemorrhoidectomy	np	np	np
6 Hysterectomy	25	15	40
7 Inguinal herniorrhaphy	53	32	85
8 Myringoplasty	np	np	np
9 Myringotomy	26	10	36
10 Prostatectomy	12	np	16
11 Septoplasty	np	11	19
12 Tonsillectomy	56	22	78
13 Total hip replacement	17	34	51
14 Total knee replacement	15	63	78
15 Varicose veins strip & ligate	26	12	38
16 Not applicable	1198	514	1712
Total	**1589**	**1166**	**2755**

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 2010. The quarter 1 result for 2010-11 is 2,755 patients admitted for surgery, up by 289 admissions from 2,466 in the same quarter in 2008-09. ACT Public Hospitals provided 9,769 elective surgery operations in 2009-10, the second highest on record. A total of 10,107 people on the ACT public hospitals' elective surgery waiting list had their surgery during 2008-09, the highest total on record.

Table 2: Median Waiting Time for Indicator Procedures and Urgency Category (July to September 2010) – preliminary

Median waiting time for the 15 indicator procedures and urgency category Quarter 1, 2010-11			
	Median waiting time (days)		
Indicator procedure	The Canberra Hospital	Calvary Public Hospital	Total ACT Public Hospitals
1 Cataract extraction	27	145	143
2 Cholecystectomy	58	92	77
3 Coronary artery bypass graft	11	0	11
4 Cystoscopy	65	136	94
5 Haemorrhoidectomy	279	220	250
6 Hysterectomy	76	52	57
7 Inguinal herniorrhaphy	34	125	102
8 Myringoplasty	351	104	317
9 Myringotomy	119	263	192
10 Prostatectomy	70	57	70
11 Septoplasty	320	518	404
12 Tonsillectomy	265	536	339
13 Total hip replacement	268	285	278
14 Total knee replacement	122	341	313
15 Varicose veins strip & ligate	368	236	311
16 Not applicable	34	69	41
Total	**42**	**123**	**74**

Table 2 above shows that median waiting time statistics (50th percentile) from the waiting list for elective surgery, by indicator procedures for the period January to June 2010. Waiting times at admission for elective surgery by Categories 1, 2 and 3 at the 50th percentile is also reported in Table 3.

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 2010) – preliminary

Number of patients waiting by urgency category and by surgical speciality Quarter 1, 2010-11						
	Category 1		Category 2		Cateogry 3	
Surgical speciality	**Overdue**	**Waiting**	**Overdue**	**Waiting**	**Overdue**	**Waiting**
Cardiothoracic surgery	0	np	0	np	0	0
Ear, nose and throat surgery	0	13	300	177	247	316
General surgery	0	19	151	193	np	127
Gynaecology	0	21	37	128	11	119
Neurosurgery	0	np	19	33	0	0
Ophthalmology	0	np	17	52	15	541
Orthopaedic surgery	0	17	665	311	67	261
Plastic surgery	0	np	101	47	19	32
Urology	23	36	265	146	27	139
Vascular surgery	0	np	20	20	50	126
Other	np	26	78	125	np	101
Total	**25**	**151**	**1653**	**1234**	**443**	**1762**

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.