

Auditor General's Report No.1 of 2011
Waiting lists for elective surgery and medical treatment

PROGRESS REPORT

on achievements against recommendations

July 2011

Preamble

On 23 June 2010, the Legislative Assembly passed a resolution that requested the Auditor General to:

“ conduct an audit of ‘Waiting Lists for Elective Surgery and Medical Treatment’ and consider, as part of the audit, concerns raised about the management of the elective surgery waiting list.”

In response to the request, the Auditor General decided to conduct a performance audit on waiting lists for elective surgery and medical treatment.

The Auditor General provided the Speaker of the ACT Legislative Assembly with her completed report, Auditor General’s Report No.1 of 2011, *Waiting Lists for Elective Surgery and Medical Treatment* (the Audit Report) on 17 January 2011.

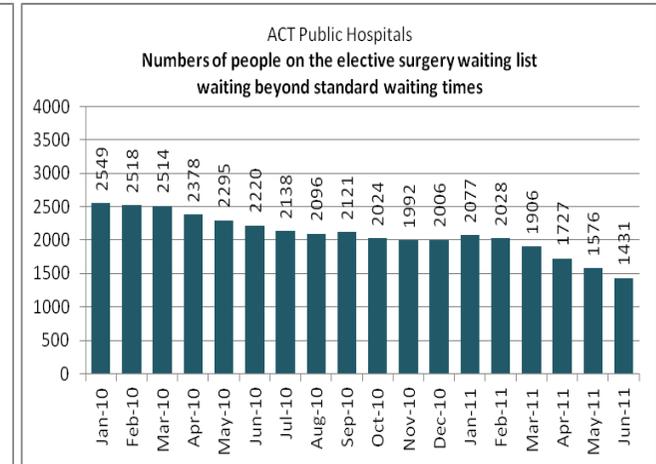
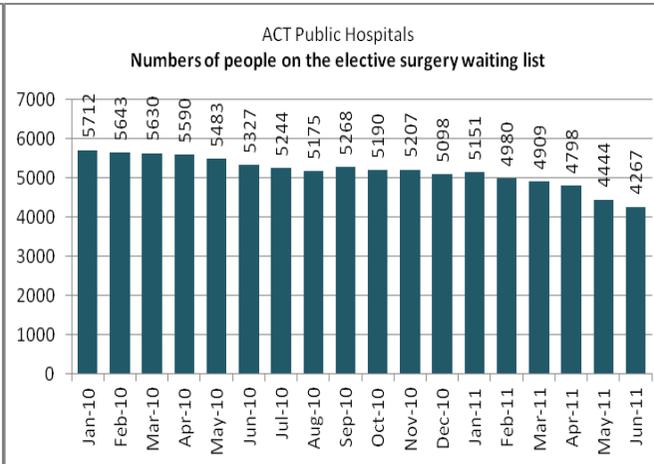
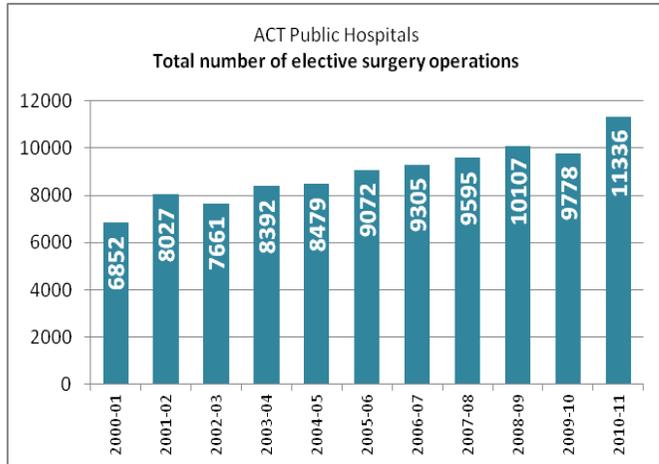
The Audit Report contains 11 recommendations in relation to improvements to the management of the elective surgery waiting list.

This report provides a progress report on achievements against the recommendations over the six months since the audit report was tabled. The progress report also includes information about access to elective surgery in the ACT over the 2010-11 financial year.

Progress against recommendations is monitored by the ACT Surgical Services Taskforce. Members of the taskforce include the ACT Minister for Health, senior surgeons and anaesthetists, and senior hospital managers from both the Canberra Hospital and Calvary Public Hospital.

Access to elective surgery in the ACT

While the Audit Report outlined a number of areas in the management of elective surgery which required improvement, the report did not note the considerable increase in access to elective surgery in the ACT over recent years, and the improvements noted in the number of people waiting for surgery with waiting times beyond clinically recommended benchmarks.



Over the 2010-11 financial year, a total of 11,336 people on the ACT public hospitals waiting list were admitted for surgery. Of this total, 11,174 had their operations in our public hospitals, with a further 162 operations completed within private hospitals under contract arrangements with the Government. The 11,336 operations completed in 2010-11 was the highest result ever recorded, and was over 1,500 more than were provided in the previous financial year. This increase in access to elective surgery has been managed over a period in which demand for emergency surgery has increased by 10% over the last two years.

Over the last 18 months, the number of people on the ACT public hospitals' waiting lists has fallen by almost 1,400, from 5,712 to 4,267 at 30 June 2011. The 4,267 people waiting at 30 June 2011 is the lowest level since 2004, and demonstrates the effectiveness of the Government's objective of increasing access to elective surgery.

Over the 18 months from January 2010 to June 2011 the number of people on the ACT public hospitals' waiting lists with waiting times greater than national benchmarks fell by 1,117, from 2,549 to 1,431. While the number of people with extended waiting times remains too high, the 44 percent improvement in this figure is evidence that the Government's efforts in increasing access to surgery for people within extended waiting times is paying off for many Canberrans. This improvement is expected to continue into 2011-12 as the ACT Government continues to increase access to elective surgery.

Progress against recommendations

Recommendation ONE	Action	Desired Outcome	Performance Measure	Timing	Progress
	Develop a single waiting list by integrating the two hospitals' databases to better manage the waiting list across the ACT.	Establish protocols for the management of a single waiting list and Implement the ACT Health Patient Administration System (PAS) at Calvary Public Hospital	Implementation of the ACT PAS and agreed protocols for management of a single waiting list	October 2012	The Health Directorate is working with Calvary Public Hospital to manage the transition to the ACT Patient Administration System.

Recommendation TWO	Action	Desired Outcome	Performance Measure	Timing	Progress
	Establish standard request for admission (RFA) and patient consent forms	Agreement reached on a standard ACT RFA	Agreement reached on the development of a new standard RFA	Agreement reached	Agreement has been reached on the development of a Standard "Request for Admission" form. An implementation plan is being developed to establish the single ACT RFA.
	Establish process of regular audit of compliance with consent processes	Audit process initiated to determine compliance with policy	Audit process established and audits undertaken	Audit of compliance in relation to the receipt of consent forms completed in April, with approximately 90 percent compliance rate. Audit to be completed every six months, with the next audit due in October 2011	

Recommendation THREE	Action	Desired Outcome	Performance Measure	Timing	Progress
	Implement and monitor the regular conduct of clerical audits by surgical booking staff to mitigate the risks of processing errors.	Develop procedures for completing clerical audits of the waiting lists (incl training programs for staff) and establish audit process to ensure compliance	Procedures developed and audits completed	Procedures in place by May 2011 and audit plan in place	Audit procedures in place. Audits completed every three months. Results of audits are discussed at the Surgical Booking Offices' team meetings to inform practice.

Progress against recommendations (continued)

Recommendation FOUR	Action	Desired Outcome	Performance Measure	Timing	Progress
	Develop a procedural manual including detailed standard operating procedures (SOPs) for surgical bookings in line with ACT Health policy	Each hospital to develop procedures manuals with complementary standard operating procedures	Procedures manual and SOPs developed	By June 2011	Procedures manuals, and associated standard operating procedures, completed for both ACT public hospitals. Training schedule developed for surgical bookings' managers and staff. Training complete for all current staff.

Recommendation FIVE	Action	Desired Outcome	Performance Measure	Timing	Progress
	Ensure Reclassifications are processed as provided for in the Waiting list policy	Establish processes for managing and recording of reclassifications (incl advice to patients and monthly reporting to surgical services taskforce (SST)	Report provided to each SST meeting	From March 2011	In place. Monthly reports completed and provided to hospitals and the Surgical Services Taskforce

Recommendation SIX	Action	Desired Outcome	Performance Measure	Timing	Progress
	Clarify the circumstances that warrant clinical review of patients on the elective surgery waiting list	Ensure that the new policy is unambiguous in relation to the need for clinical reviews	New policy contains unambiguous statement in relation to requirements for clinical review	By April 2011	New policy endorsed by the ACT Surgical Services Taskforce in February 2011 and by the Health Directorate's Executive Council in March 2011. The policy can be found on the Health website, at http://health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=dlpubpoldoc&document=2738

Progress against recommendations (continued)

Recommendation SEVEN	Action	Desired Outcome	Performance Measure	Timing	Progress
	Implement strategies to reduce waiting times.	Reduced numbers of patients waiting longer than recommended waiting times through increased access to surgery at ACT public hospitals and through partnerships with private providers	Provide 10,712 elective surgery operations in 2010-11 - a 10% increase on the previous year, and continue into 2011-12 and beyond	Ongoing	The ACT Government provided 11,336 elective surgery operations, 570 above the original target for the 2010-11 financial year and over 1,500 more than provided in the 2009-10 year. Over the 18 months from January 2010 to June 2011, the number of people on the ACT public hospitals' waiting lists waiting longer than recommended waiting times fell by 44 percent or 1,118 from 2,549 to 1,431. This figure is expected to continue to fall during 2011-12 as the Government continues its efforts to further increase access to surgery in partnership with the Commonwealth Government.

Recommendation EIGHT	Action	Desired Outcome	Performance Measure	Timing	Progress
	Establish doctor leave plans and patient management plans where doctors schedule leave	Establish doctor leave plans and processes for providing patient management plans	Leave plans in place and processes developed for managing patients	April 2011	In place at both ACT public hospitals.

Recommendation NINE	Action	Desired Outcome	Performance Measure	Completion date/date of effect	Monitoring/Review requirements
	Regularly monitor avoidable factors for surgery postponements	Report hospital initiated postponements to the SST	Report to SST	From March 2011	Report provided to every meeting of the Surgical Services Taskforce

Progress against recommendations (continued)

Recommendation TEN	Action	Desired Outcome	Performance Measure	Completion date/date of effect	Monitoring/Review requirements
	The Canberra Hospital should implement processes for routine data integrity audits of all OPD waiting lists to ensure that all data is valid, complete and accurate.	Establish formal annual audit of outpatient data set	Annual audit of outpatient data set	Annually	Initial audit completed. Validation processes established for outpatient data sets. Outpatient data validated monthly.

Recommendation ELEVEN	Action	Desired Outcome	Performance Measure	Completion date/date of effect	Monitoring/Review requirements
	Establish a governance and accountability framework to monitor, review and report on the progress of agreed recommendations of the outpatients review	Establish a mechanism to oversee implementation of recommendations	New governance process established	April 2011	Administration of general outpatient services has been consolidated under the management of a new position of Director Outpatient Services. This position will work day to day to the Executive Director of the Capital Region Cancer Services & Outpatients. A steering committee chaired by the Deputy Director-General of the Canberra Hospital and Health Services has been implemented to steer outpatient redesign and redevelopment.