



Queensland Health Response to AMAQ Hospital Audit *“The Facts”*

23 February 2007

BEDS

The AMAQ's report refers to 2004-05 figures.

It is out of date and fails to acknowledge that Queensland Health has opened hundreds more hospital beds since then.

And, through several projects throughout the State, many more are on the way.

Bed capacity in public hospitals increased by approximately 300 in 2005-06.

Over the next five years Queensland Health will embark on the largest hospital bed program ever undertaken in Australia.

Through redevelopments at existing hospitals from the Gold Coast to Cairns, Queensland Health will deliver more than 1,000 extra hospital beds.

New beds are opening all the time.

Earlier this month, the Prince Charles Hospital opened a new 30-bed ward and a 10-bed short stay unit and next week the Townsville Hospital will open a new 22-bed emergency medical unit.

Later this year, Robina Hospital will open a new 26-bed emergency department – taking pressure off Southport – and Logan will open a refurbished emergency department with extra beds.

We are also building a new 750-bed hospital on the Gold Coast – the planning of which is well underway, a new 650-bed hospital on the Sunshine Coast and a new 400-bed Queensland Children's Hospital.

During the election, the AMAQ called for an extra 1,650 hospital beds for Queensland.

With a range of major projects involving existing and new hospitals, Queensland Health will easily exceed this target.

Each additional bed will come with recurrent funding to ensure they are adequately staffed.

CULTURE

Changing the workplace culture in an organisation of some 60,000 employees is a massive challenge.

It cannot be done overnight but Queensland Health is making progress.

We have implemented the following major initiatives since the health enquiries of 2005:

- A new staff Code of Conduct emphasising Queensland Health's renewed values of caring for people; leadership; respect; and integrity;
- Leadership development programs for Queensland Health executives, senior clinicians, managers and supervisors;
- Improved resolutions of workplace conflict and harassment;
- Regular measurements of workplace culture through staff opinion surveys with all staff to be surveyed by the end of 2007; and
- Performance appraisal and development.

Queensland Health has also undergone a significant restructure to give doctors a greater say in decision-making regarding the public health system.

We have empowered clinical networks to start playing a leading role in the day-to-day planning and co-ordination services throughout the state.

Each network is represented by senior doctors and is responsible for a different aspect of the system such as intensive care units, emergency departments or mental health.

New positions have also been established putting senior clinicians in charge of four of our major hospitals.

The AMAQ says : *"Good hospitals with the capacity to function effectively help attract doctors to work in the public hospital system."*

Since June 2005, Queensland Health has increased its number of doctors by 736. It now employs 5,288 compared to 4,552.

A major factor in the successful recruitment drive has been the better wages and conditions we are now offering doctors.

For instance, a specialist working in a large regional hospital's intensive care unit is now earning around \$396,000 per annum (with average overtime hours) compared to \$224,000 in 2005.

A middle-range senior doctor in a rural emergency department is now earning more than \$200,000 per annum compared to around \$124,000 in 2005.

13 HEALTH

Queensland Health rejects AMAQ's view that 13 HEALTH is a waste of money.

13 HEALTH is a statewide 24-hour hotline which gives all Queenslanders access to health information, triage and referral services.

Since it began on 24 April 2006, 13 HEALTH has responded to over 130,000 calls.

The service provides advice by registered nurses who use a clinical support system to go through the caller's presenting symptoms and recommend a time and place for care.

Callers may be advised of self-care, to see a GP, or attend a hospital emergency department if the condition warrants it.

It has become a valued feature of Queensland's public health system.

Emergency departments have reported a reduction in public calls allowing them to focus on attendances.

AMAQ comments on long waits for ENT services.

Queensland Health has reduced its long waits for ENT elective surgery from 20.3 percent in January 2006 to 5.3 percent in January 2007.

TOOWOOMBA

Toowoomba has increased its clinical staff by 139 since June 2005.

Queensland Health has delivered funding to the district to increase the number of beds at the Base Hospital to 200. (An increase of 24 beds).

ROCKHAMPTON

Rockhampton has increased its clinical staff by 102 since June 2005.

A major capital works program for Rockhampton consists of a \$90 million program to provide a new emergency department; a satellite dialysis unit; a maternity, paediatrics and neonatal nursery; an oncology treatment centre; 30 extra medical beds; extra funding for oral health services and rehabilitation services and an educational training centre.

Clinical Directors are involved in the planning of this new program and open staff forums are held every two months.

There has not been a neurosurgeon at Rockhampton for a number of years. The Clinical CEO has indicated that recruitment of a neurosurgeon is not a priority at this point in time.

The hospital currently employs eight general medical registrars. The three remaining positions have been recruited and will be commencing shortly. Rockhampton has a full complement of anaesthetic staff.

SUNSHINE COAST

The Sunshine Coast has increased its clinical staff by 238 since June 2005.

The new Kawana Hospital Service Plan is nearing completion. The Division of GPs and the local medical association have been consulted about the redevelopment and the Minister is forming a stakeholder group that will include the Medical Director of the Division of GPs and the President of the Sunshine Coast Medical Association.

The new Kawana Hospital will provide approximately 650 beds. There is an election commitment to provide an additional 60 beds by 2010–2030 at Nambour General Hospital and

30 beds at Caloundra Health Service. Master planning is underway to ascertain scope and costs of the proposal to provide these beds.

There have been many enhancements for the Sunshine Coast Community Mental Health services. This includes one psychiatrist, three community mental health nurses and one administrative officer in 06/07. A patient safety officer and a quality coordinator have commenced in the mental health service to support service and quality improvements.

FRASER COAST

Fraser Coast has increased its clinical staff by 78 since June 2005.

MACKAY

Mackay has increased its clinical staff by 64 since June 2005.

A Clinical Service Plan and Master Plan have been completed. These will be used as a basis to plan and fund future services and infrastructure over the next five years. \$7.8 million has been allocated for short term transitional strategies, and works have already commenced.

The Mackay Intensive Care Unit is fully staffed.

The Child Safety Unit at Mackay is fully staffed and a new more spacious facility is planned for the near future.

In Mackay as in many regional hospitals aged care patients take up beds due to the lack of Commonwealth funded aged care places.

The recruitment of nurses continues to be a priority. Recruitment is made more difficult by the lack of affordable accommodation in the Mackay region due to the mining boom.

TOWNSVILLE

Townsville has increased its clinical staff by 240 since June 2005.

A new 22 bed emergency medicine unit will be operational in the near future. Townsville has successfully recruited specialists to urology, anaesthetics, radiology, nephrology and facio-maxillary and will be commencing over the next six months.

There are excellent training opportunities for junior medical staff with the prospect of training in a specialty. It is recognised that the training provided to the junior doctors in Townsville is of a very high standard, comparable to training provided in other major centres.

ROYAL BRISBANE AND WOMEN'S

Royal Brisbane and Women's has increased its clinical staff by 469 since June 2005.

A project to reduce access block at the RBWH has commenced and achieved a continual downward trend in average monthly access block.

The Emergency Department is fully staffed at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital in terms of specialists and registrars.

A process to recruitment to the Clinical CEO is in place. Clinical leadership is being provided by the Acting Clinical CEO.

CAIRNS

Cairns has increased its clinical staff by 233 since June 2005.

The diagnostic radiology services have been contracted to a private provider and this arrangement is working well.

The Cairns Intensive Care Unit is fully staffed with all 10 beds open. A patient flow project is underway to address bed management and access through the hospital. Clinical Services and Master Planning for the new and expanded emergency department will commence in April 2007.

Cardiothoracic patients are appropriately transferred to Townsville as the North Queensland Centre for cardiac services and neonatal intensive care patients are transferred to Townsville or Brisbane depending on service availability. To do otherwise would mean unsafe practices.

GOLD COAST

The Gold Coast has increased its clinical staff by 413 since June 2005.

Detailed planning for the Gold Coast University Hospital (Parklands) is underway and consistent with the timetable previously released.

Interim measures are planned to cope with demand including 20 additional emergency department beds to be available at the Gold Coast Hospital by July 2007. Renal dialysis services will expand from 12 dialysis chairs to 24.

Robina Hospital has funding for 20 additional beds, 10 are currently operational. A further 10 will be opened when staff recruitment has been completed along with a new emergency department and an expanded critical care unit, renal services and diagnostic services.

A Health Precinct Review has been undertaken and Queensland Health is now considering this report. This is on schedule.