Australia’s first statewide surgery guarantee announced

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) patients will have their elective (non-emergency) surgery on time under a new statewide initiative announced by the Queensland Government today.

From 1 February 2015, the Wait Time Guarantee will ensure all eligible Queenslanders who are ready for elective surgery will have their procedure within the medically recommended time.

If a Hospital and Health Service (HHS) cannot provide surgery within this time, the patient will be offered the next available appointment in a public or private hospital at no cost. This surgery will be arranged by the hospital that the patient was originally referred to.

Patients who do not receive their surgery within the clinically recommended time will not have to pay for any travel or accommodation costs if they are treated more than 50 km from their original hospital.

Chief Executive, Kevin Hegarty said in 2013/14 there were 4,805 elective surgery procedures performed within the SCHHS - an increase of 998 from 2012/13.

“We are determined to continue to both expand our capacity and adopt innovative practices to provide high quality health services in increasing volumes to meet continual growth in demand.” Mr Hegarty said.

“We have been focused on reducing the elective surgery waiting lists and the number of patients waiting longer than clinically recommended is well on track to reach zero by the end of the year.

“Our staff have shown outstanding commitment to improve and focus on a number of system projects to shorten wait times and increase efficiencies has delivered results. We are committed to ensuring every patient who needs surgery and is ready for surgery is treated on time”.

From 1 February 2015, all eligible elective surgery will be carried out within the following nationally defined times:

- **Urgent (category 1):** Surgery recommended within 30 days of being added to the wait list, as the condition could get worse and become an emergency
- **Semi-urgent (category 2):** Surgery recommended within 90 days of being added to the wait list, as the condition is causing pain or disability but is unlikely to become an emergency
- **Non-urgent (category 3):** Surgery recommended within 365 days of being added to the wait list, as the condition is causing minimal pain or disability.

Patients who are currently on Queensland Health’s elective surgery wait list will receive a letter in early December explaining how the guarantee works.

For more information about the Wait Time Guarantee visit [www.qld.gov.au/WaitTimeGuarantee](http://www.qld.gov.au/WaitTimeGuarantee) or call 1300 332 807 between 7am and 9pm, 7 days a week.

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