HOSPITAL BEDS

This fact sheet provides details about the types and numbers of beds available in the NSW public hospital system and explains how many beds are available, why bed numbers vary and the commitment of the NSW Government to increase bed numbers.

WHAT IS A BED?

This sounds like a simple question, but it’s not. There are four main categories of beds:

- **Available beds** in wards ready for admission of patients from the emergency department;
- **Other hospital beds** including those in specialist units such as burns and transplants;
- **Other beds** which include hospital in the home, residential/aged care and respite beds; and,
- **Treatment spaces** in emergency; operating theatres/recovery rooms; delivery suites (including bassinets); hospital transit lounges or used for same day therapy or dialysis chairs.

HOW MANY BEDS ARE THERE IN NSW PUBLIC HOSPITALS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Available beds</th>
<th>Other hospital beds</th>
<th>Other beds</th>
<th>Treatment spaces</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13,496</td>
<td>5,220</td>
<td>2,199</td>
<td>3,598</td>
<td>24,513</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As at June 2011 / source : NSW Department of Health Annual Report 2010/2011

WHY DO THE NUMBER OF AVAILABLE BEDS SEEM TO VARY SO MUCH?

During peak periods of demand, such as winter, more beds are required (up to 20% extra) and so are “opened” – they are available and staffed. In non-peak periods some of these beds (which are still physically there) may be temporarily “closed” if not needed.
During the course of any one day there may be a variation in the number of beds available, influenced by such factors as staffing, the rate of patient discharge from hospital or the flow-throughs from the emergency departments.

WHAT DID THE NSW GOVERNMENT PROMISE TO DO ABOUT BEDS?
Over the next four years to make 1,390 new beds available, which includes making 550 adult acute overnight public hospital beds available with $293 million of NSW funds. The other 840 new beds will be paid for from NSW share of federal hospital funding.

WHAT HAS THE NSW GOVERNMENT DELIVERED TO DATE – AND IS IT ON-TRACK FOR ITS TARGET?
- 565 beds of the 1,390 beds are now opened (as of 31 Jan 2012)
- 160 of the 565 beds were opened since 26 March 2011
- The remaining 405 were committed to by both the current and previous NSW Government
- The NSW Government is on track to deliver its promise