



Emergency Department Taskforce

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Emergency Department (ED) Taskforce Newsletter

Issue 12: December 2025

Dear colleagues,

As the Taskforce concluded its seventeenth meeting, we reflect on key areas of focus from 2025.

- **Hospital Access Targets (HATs):** it's been over a year since the Hospital Access Targets, or HATs as they are known, were first introduced on 1 July 2024. HATs focus on patient flow in the ED and the hospital including mental health patient flow. The [Bureau of Health Information](#), Health Care Quarterly, commenced reporting on four HATs, in the January to March 2025 report, specifically for patients leaving the ED within a specified time and mode.
- **Improving Outcomes for Aboriginal Patients in EDs:** progression of Aboriginal Health strategies to improve outcomes for Aboriginal patients in the ED including improving access to Aboriginal Health data to inform change, increasing cultural awareness in EDs, increase the use of models of care supporting Aboriginal patients in ED and Aboriginal workforce in ED strategies.
- **ED Wait time website:** endorsement of the redesign and modernisation of the [ED Waiting Times website](#).
- **Emerging Artificial Intelligence (AI) models – improving care in the ED:** The adoption of AI is rapidly expanding across NSW Government agencies, including NSW Health. Local initiatives are underway, and research is being conducted into the use of AI in imaging to improve clinical decision making and patient flow. The Taskforce was briefed on the use of AI in imaging to support interpretation, clinical decision making and patient flow.
- **Emergency Care Assessment and Treatment (ECAT):** by standardising nurse-initiated protocols, consistent care can be provided to our patients in NSW public hospital EDs to safely reduce the time a patient waits for treatment. The preliminary data for the ECAT evaluation was presented to the Taskforce, and the Taskforce eagerly awaits its release.
- **Sustainable ED:** There are rapidly increasing legal, regulatory and policy requirements for NSW Health to decarbonise. EDs are one of our 'carbon hotspots'. Environmentally sustainable ED practices and many other net zero projects can improve efficiencies and save money. Further information is available at [Climate Risk and Net Zero](#).

Emergency Department (ED) Relief Package:

implementation support and monitoring of the strategies associated with the \$480.7 million four-year ED Relief Package to help ease the pressure on stretched NSW hospitals, by expanding alternatives to the ED and improving patient flow, including:

- **\$171.4 million expansion** of services accessed via the free 24/7 Healthdirect helpline (1800 022 222) through the Single Front Door to provide access to alternative care pathways. Services now include the **statewide virtual urgent care service** (for adults and children), the 24/7 virtualGP primary care safety net service, NSW Health Urgent Care Services, as well as linkages with local GPs, pharmacists and other healthcare providers.
- **\$70 million for the expansion of ED Short Stay Units** to improve patient flow to reduce ED wait times by nearly 80,000 hours
- **\$31.4 million investment in Hospital in the Home** increasing capacity and the use of virtual care for patients to either be sent home early from hospital to continue to receive hospital-level care or avoid hospital altogether by receiving all care at home
- **\$15.1 million upgrade to the ambulance matrix system**, the NewGen Matrix will provide real time hospital data to enable paramedics to transport patients to EDs with greater capacity and reduced wait times. Release 1 is now live with a new Patient Acuity Tool, updated clinical allocation categories and the enhanced Ambulance Arrivals Board
- The **\$53.9 million investment for the Discharge Patient Flow Concierge Strategy** to improve discharge processes and care coordination through dedicated staffing and new digital algorithms. These are accessed by NSW Health staff in the Patient Flow Portal. The algorithm is now live across multiple districts with the statewide rollout ongoing.

Kind Regards,

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