



Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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IMPROVEMENTS IN ELECTIVE SURGERY A ‘SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT’: NSW AUDITOR-GENERAL

Health Minister Jillian Skinner has welcomed the release of an Auditor-General’s report into elective surgery which confirms NSW is undertaking record numbers of elective surgery in a more timely way.

The *Managing Operating Theatre Efficiency for Elective Surgery Report* concludes: “Public hospitals are now treating patients from waiting lists substantially within clinical timeframes. This is a significant achievement”.

Mrs Skinner said the NSW Government committed to providing an additional 13,000 operations in its first four-year term of government.

“After two years in office we are well and truly going to meet and exceed this target. NSW hospitals have performed more than 9,000 additional surgeries in that time,” Mrs Skinner said.

“Additional funding provided in the record 2013/14 state budget includes provision for a further 3,000 additional elective surgical procedures.

“Thanks to this increase in activity and the great effort of our clinicians, NSW has recorded one of the best results nationally on treating patients within clinically recommended timeframes (National Elective Surgery Target) and will be receiving Commonwealth reward funding for meeting national targets.”

Mrs Skinner said the latest Bureau of Health Information Hospital Quarterly report on elective surgery (January to March 2013) proved how effective the NSW Government had been in delivering elective surgery in a timely manner. See below:

| Elective surgery category | Under Labor (Jan – Mar 2011) | Under Liberals & Nationals (Jan - Mar 2013) |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Urgent (within 30 days) | 92 per cent on time | 99 per cent on time |
| Semi-urgent (within 90 days) | 87 per cent on time | 94 per cent on time |
| Non-urgent (within 365 days) | 92 per cent on time | 94 per cent on time |

“The Auditor-General is right, this is a significant achievement – but I also acknowledge that there are further improvements to be made,” Mrs Skinner said.

Mrs Skinner said the NSW Surgical Services Taskforce, chaired by surgeon Dr Michael McGlynn, is guiding the reform of surgical services across the state. The taskforce has developed a number of initiatives to improve operating theatre efficiency while ensuring patient safety is paramount.

These include:

- improving pre-admission assessment processes to reduce cancellations.
- introducing new models of care, such as High Volume Short Stay Surgical Units.
- ensuring emergencies are streamed so planned surgery goes to schedule.
- implementing a Surgery Access Line (1800 053 456), a free confidential service that patients, carers and their GPs can use to gain information on surgery waiting times.

“I welcome the Auditor-General’s *Managing Operating Theatre Efficiency for Elective Surgery* Report, which identifies many of the key areas the Ministry of Health and the NSW Surgical Services Taskforce are currently working on to continuously improve the efficiency and effectiveness of surgical services in NSW,” Mrs Skinner said.

“The Auditor-General also identifies areas where improvement is needed, including that local managers need to be able to use all available information to better manage operating theatre efficiency.

“I have asked Dr Mary Foley, the Director-General of NSW Health, to consider and implement all recommendations made by the Auditor-General.”