

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 914**  
**Asked on 26 May 2006**

MR ENGLISH asked the Minister for Health (MR ROBERTSON)-

QUESTION:

What improvements have occurred at Redlands Hospital in the last twelve months and how is the Redlands Hospital performing?

ANSWER:

There have been numerous improvements at Redland Hospital over the past 12 months including:

- opening of the \$19 million Redland Residential Care Unit;
- progress on the \$10.5 million Redland Hospital expansion project;
- opening of new medical beds;
- introduction of the Healthy Hearing program for newborns;
- establishment of 20 new community-based mental health positions;
- three Nurse Practitioner positions; and
- four new Indigenous health positions.

Patients have also given the Redland Hospital top marks in Queensland Health's recent statewide satisfaction survey.

*Redland Residential Care Unit*

The \$19 million 128-bed Redland Residential Care Unit opened in March 2006. The Unit accommodates frail, aged residents and residents who have dementia. It is part of the Queensland Government's five year, \$120 million aged care capital works program to improve residential aged care facilities throughout Queensland, in line with new Commonwealth Government standards. The design of the unit allows for high levels of care in a secure, home-like environment. Residents have single air-conditioned rooms with a shared en-suite and there is flexibility to allow twin or double share rooms. Safe shaded courtyards and outdoor spaces add to the home-like feel.

*Redland Hospital expansion project*

Redland Hospital is expanding or extending services in a number of existing or new areas, including dialysis and emergency, to meet the needs of the community. The tendering process is currently underway for the \$10.5 million project, which is on schedule for completion in 2007. The expansion will see the Emergency Department expand from 13 to 30 treatment spaces, including five short stay/observation beds. A 12 chair renal dialysis unit will also be established, enabling the majority of Bayside residents who need dialysis to receive their treatment closer to home, rather than having to travel to Princess Alexandra Hospital for care. The hospital's Pathology and Pharmacy departments will be expanded and the Health Records Department will be relocated to a new building.

#### *New beds*

Fifteen new beds have been opened in Redland Hospital's medical ward and bed usage has been reconfigured across the hospital to address the issue of access block in the Emergency Department.

#### *Healthy Hearing Program*

All newborn babies at Redland Hospital are now offered a free hearing screen as part of the statewide Healthy Hearing Program. The screens began in January using specialised new equipment. Early detection, diagnosis and intervention is vital for babies with a hearing loss. If hearing loss is detected early, and treatment begins before babies are six months old, they have a better chance of improved communication, health and education.

#### *Enhancements to Indigenous health services*

The number of Indigenous health worker positions has been increased from 3 to 7, and the district now has its first targeted Indigenous health plan in place. The plan supports Queensland Health's objective to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health so that the differences in health status between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the rest of the Queensland population are eliminated.

#### *New nurse practitioner positions*

Two senior Redland Hospital emergency nurses have been awarded scholarships to study to become nurse practitioners, a new category of nursing that provide an exciting career path for Queensland nurses. The nurse practitioner role is new to Queensland, but it has worked well in other states and overseas. Nurse practitioners are able to take on tasks outside the scope of the traditional nursing role. These tasks may include ordering a range of diagnostic investigations, prescribing some medications, preparing treatment plans and referring patients to other health professionals. The role will be guided by clear clinical protocols.

#### *Enhancements to community-based mental health services*

The district has received funding for 20 new community-based mental health positions and permanent funding for the 'Alternatives to Hospital' program. This program offers mental health consumers a choice between home-based and hospital care.

#### *Patient satisfaction survey*

Patients have rated Redland Hospital the best large-sized hospital in the state, according to a patient satisfaction survey commissioned by Queensland Health last year. Patients admitted to hospital between December 2004 and May 2005 were selected randomly to participate. The patients were quizzed on all matters that affected them: from the standard of their medical treatment and post-procedure treatment to the standard of the food and friendliness of the ward staff.

Seventy-four public hospitals were included and each was assigned to one of the following five peer groups:

- principal referral and specialised;
- large;
- medium;
- small and rural;
- small and remote.

Redland Hospital had the highest average score in the 'large hospital' group in all of the areas surveyed including:

- Access and Admission (69%);
- General Patient Information (75%);
- Treatment and Related Information (69%);
- Complaints Management (70%);
- Physical Environment (69%); and
- Discharge and Follow-up (65%).

Redland Hospital also achieved an overall care index score of 70% which was the highest in the 'large hospital' peer group.

Redland Hospital provides health services to one of the fastest growing communities in Queensland. Service demand in some areas, including emergency medicine and maternity, has been exponential in nature.

Total emergency department presentations are expected to be almost 40,000 this financial year, compared to 37,681 in 2004-2005. This is an increase of more than 6%. In the financial year to date (July 2005-April 2006) Emergency Department presentations have increased to 33,185 compared to 31,559 in the same period last financial year.

Total births are expected to be approximately 1,800 this financial year, compared to 1,629 in 2004-2005. This is an increase of more than 9%. In the financial year to date (July 2005-April 2006) the number of births has increased to 1,564 compared to 1,324 in the same period last financial year.

The total number of inpatients cared for at Redland Hospital is expected to be approximately 17,000 this financial year, compared to 16,560 in 2004-2005. This is an increase of 3%. In the financial year to date (July 2005-April 2006) the number of inpatients has increased to 14,177 compared to 13,672 in the same period last financial year.