

Question on Notice
No. 629
Asked on 10 May 2011

MR SORENSEN asked the Minister for Health (MR WILSON)-

QUESTION:

With reference to the increased volume of patients through the Hervey Bay Emergency Department and as I understand that when the pathology department moves to its new location, this will create space alongside the emergency department to fit out an assessment unit for up to six beds -

Will the Minister agree to making available both capital and recurrent operating costs to cover this innovation as this would relieve the pressure through the emergency department as well as reduce bed block in the wards, and in doing so reduce the need to postpone surgery?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for Hervey Bay for his question.

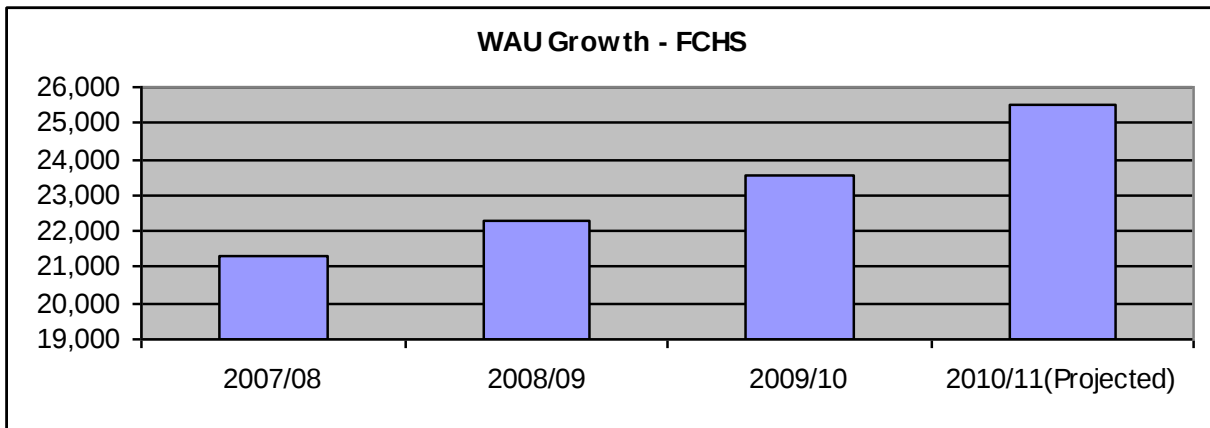
The hospitals on the Fraser Coast provide excellent services, in one of the high growth regions of the state.

The Bligh Government has recognised this growth on the Fraser Coast with the budget doubling from \$79.7 million in 2002/03 to around \$162.8 million in 2010/11.

The Preliminary Infrastructure Planning for the Fraser Coast is currently under consideration by the Government, and will be taking all possible recommendations into account to improve services across the Fraser Coast.

BACKGROUND:

- The activity growth on the Fraser Coast has been around 20% from 2007/08 to 2010/11 and can be best demonstrated by the following graph:



- **Elective Surgery** - There have been 117 elective surgery cases cancelled over the February/March period due to the unavailability of beds with several patients being cancelled on more than one occasion.
- **Access Block** – Patients who have been required to stay in ED for longer than 24 hours due to the unavailability of beds:
 - January 12
 - February 27
 - March 38
- It is projected that the new pathology building at the HBH will be complete by September 2011 with the vacated space which is adjacent to the HBH Emergency Department available soon after.
- It has been raised with the senior medical staff at the Fraser Coast Health Service the benefits of establishing a Medical Assessment and Processing Unit (MAPU) to assist with the current bed pressures and the access block from the ED.
- The establishment of these beds is likely to allow the quarantining of elective surgery beds that will in turn provide an opportunity to meet elective surgery targets.
- The medical staff although viewing this as an interim solution support the concept.
- The senior medical staff have indicated that action needs to occur as a matter of urgency as Maryborough and Hervey Bay hospitals have been severely challenged over recent months and leading into a period of traditionally much higher activity.
- The senior medical staff have expressed concern over the escalating activity growth, the current unavailability of beds and see this as a major risk to the effective delivery of clinical services on the Fraser Coast.
- The endorsed Fraser Coast Services Plan has projected a need for an additional 85 beds by the year 2016 which is around 17 beds per annum to that date. There is no formal plan in place to achieve this projection.

