

Question on Notice

No. 471

Asked on 2 April 2019

MRS D FRECKLINGTON asked the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services (HON DR S MILES) –

QUESTION

Will the Minister advise the number of times Queensland public hospitals have gone under code yellow (or the equivalent) for 2014 to 2019 to date (reported separately by year and by hospital)?

ANSWER

A code yellow is defined in Australian Standard AS4083-2010 *Planning for emergencies – Health care facilities* as an ‘event that impacts the facility and may be caused by an internal or external event which may adversely affect service delivery and/or safety of persons requiring a response’.

Under the *Queensland Health Disaster and Emergency Incident Plan*, a ‘Code Yellow’ emergency is defined as “Loss of Essential Services (including chemical emergencies)”.

Examples of situations in which a code yellow may be activated include router outages, disruption to telephone services, failure of or disruption to electricity, water, information communication and technology systems, structural damage, and incidents involving hazardous substances.

Whilst the standard does not specifically list bed capacity as an example of a code yellow, a number of Hospital and Health Services (HHSs) will use this code when faced with capacity issues. Some HHSs use other terminology. There are also local variations in the incident management protocols that determine when an HHS will activate a code.

Activating a code yellow is a local operational response mechanism by hospitals that is not and has never been routinely reported.

The Department of Health is designing a central data reporting process for defined incident activations that will also standardise this process across the state.

Most code yellow activations are stood down within 24 hours.