

Question on Notice

No. 890

Asked on 18 June 2021

MR M CRANDON ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES (HON Y D'ATH) –

QUESTION

With reference to the Australian Medical Association statement on 11 May 2021 that Queensland needs a five-year ED action plan to meet demand pressures—

Will the Minister advise the Minister's response and how the government plans to meet the current demand pressures in emergency departments across the state?

ANSWER

The demand on our emergency departments is very evident, but not unique to Queensland. Every jurisdiction in the country is facing increased pressure in their health systems, particularly their Emergency Departments.

Between July 1, 2020 and May 31, 2021, Queensland's emergency departments have provided more care to more patients, and seen more patients within the clinically recommended time, than in any previous year.

On average, this financial year up until 31 May 2021, our emergency departments have seen over 6,500 patients each and every day.

Between 1 July 2020 and 31 May 2021, there were over 2.19 million presentations seeking care from an emergency department.

To support Hospital and Health Services to meet these increasing demands, Queensland Health has made a range of investments to support the sustainable management of unplanned and emergency care services.

This includes funding such as Care in the Right Setting program, expanding Hospital in the Home services, and the establishment of mental health co-responder models. These initiatives aim to support Queenslanders to safely receive their required care outside our acute hospitals.

Queensland Health also committed \$25 million for the urgent expansion of acute beds in 2020-21 to support the surge in unplanned and emergency demand.

The recently announced Care4Qld strategy has been developed to respond to the challenges of increased emergency department demand. By delivering this phased investment strategy over the coming years, Queensland Health will enhance access to emergent unplanned care where and when Queenslanders need it most.

Care4Qld will reshape service delivery to support the healthcare system to respond to current and future unplanned and emergency demand beyond the three years of the phased strategy.

The Care4QLD strategy includes an initial \$100 million investment in 2021-22 through Phase One to open additional beds, support the delivery of models of care to relieve pressure on emergency departments, and develop pathways to ensure patients are discharged from hospital at the right time to improve patient flow and bed capacity.

Following the Treasurer's recent announcement of a record budget for health, the Department is working closely with Hospital and Health Services across the State to finalise the next phase of the Care4Qld strategy, which will include more investment in 2021-22 to deliver more beds to improve the flow of patients through emergency departments, to provide appropriate care for Queenslanders when they need it most.