

Question on Notice

No. 693

Asked on 23 June 2022

MR B MICKELBERG asked the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services (HON Y D'ATH)—

QUESTION

With reference to patients on the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service Category 2 Ophthalmology Specialist Outpatient Waitlist, who have been advised they will not receive an initial appointment until August 2023 and noting the State Government's budget contains no specific funding to reduce the number of such patients waiting longer than clinically recommended for an initial appointment—

Will the Minister advise what other initiatives or measures, the State Government intends to implement to ensure Sunshine Coast residents get the treatment they deserve within clinically recommended timeframes?

ANSWER

The Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (HHS) is committed to patient safety and care and providing timely services.

I have been advised by the HHS that the demand for Sunshine Coast HHS Ophthalmology Outpatient Services is high. In 2019-20, the HHS provided 16,646 Occasions of Service. This increased significantly the following financial year, where 24,930 Occasions of Service were delivered. From June 2021 to the end of May 2022, despite the impact of COVID-19, the Ophthalmology service provided 21,083 Occasions of Service. The increasing demand, and impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, have resulted in some delays to recommended wait times.

The Sunshine Coast HHS is working hard to resolve this situation. Strategies to increase capacity and reduce patient wait times include recruiting additional Medical Officers and outpatient staff, outsourcing suitable procedures to private providers as appropriate, increasing allied health and nurse led clinics, and introducing General Practitioners with Special Interest in Ophthalmology clinics.