

4.3.10 MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

OVERVIEW

Agency	Forecast 1997-98	Estimate 1998-99	Variation
	\$m	\$m	%
Department of Health			
Total Expenses	6,329.7	6,632.7	4.8
Asset Acquisitions	453.2	457.9	1.0
Health Care Complaints Commission			
Total Expenses	4.9	5.0	2.1
Asset Acquisitions
New South Wales Cancer Council			
Total Expenses	22.3	23.0	3.0
Asset Acquisitions	0.2	0.4	95.3
New South Wales Medical Board			
Total Expenses	4.1	3.7	(-) 8.4
Asset Acquisitions	0.1	0.3	...
Department of Aboriginal Affairs			
Total Expenses	51.0	28.2	(-) 44.7
Asset Acquisitions
Total, Minister for Health and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs			
Total Expenses	6,412.0	6,692.6	4.4
Asset Acquisitions	453.5	458.6	1.1

Budgeted total expenses to be incurred by the Department of Health in 1998-99 of \$6,633 million will be \$303 million or 4.8 per cent higher than 1997-98 forecast expenditure.

Since this Government came to office, total recurrent Consolidated Fund support for the Department of Health has increased by \$1,317 million or 33.7 per cent.

In part, State funding has been increased to offset a relative reduction in Commonwealth support. If the Commonwealth matched 1998-99 State funding based on the relative funding shares that prevailed 1994-95, a further \$470 million in Commonwealth funding would have been received.

Budgeted total expenses for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs decrease in 1998-99 because payments made to the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983, cease in 1998.

Since the first payments were made in 1984, over \$500 million has been provided to the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, half of which has been invested in a statutory fund, the remainder being used for land councils' administration, maintenance of existing assets and purchase of land and related equipment.

As part of the Government's commitment to redress the disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal people in social and economic areas, it is making available, over a seven-year period, \$200 million to the Aboriginal Communities Development Program. Funding of \$10.75 million has been provided for this purpose in 1998-99.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

The 1998-99 Budget maintains the Government's commitment to the three principal goals of the NSW Health System -

- *Improving health* - maintaining an ongoing concern with the health of the population and the outcome of programs and services;
- *Improving access* - ensuring access to comprehensive services is available on the basis of need; and
- *Improving quality of care and service* - fostering best practice, providing the patient with a clear and easy pathway through the system and managing resources effectively.

The Budget will enable further progress to be made in achieving a fairer share of resources and access to health services in New South Wales.

Initiatives and programs for improved health for specific population groups, including Aboriginal people and people with mental health problems, will be maintained.

The Budget continues the emphasis on delivering improved and integrated community health services.

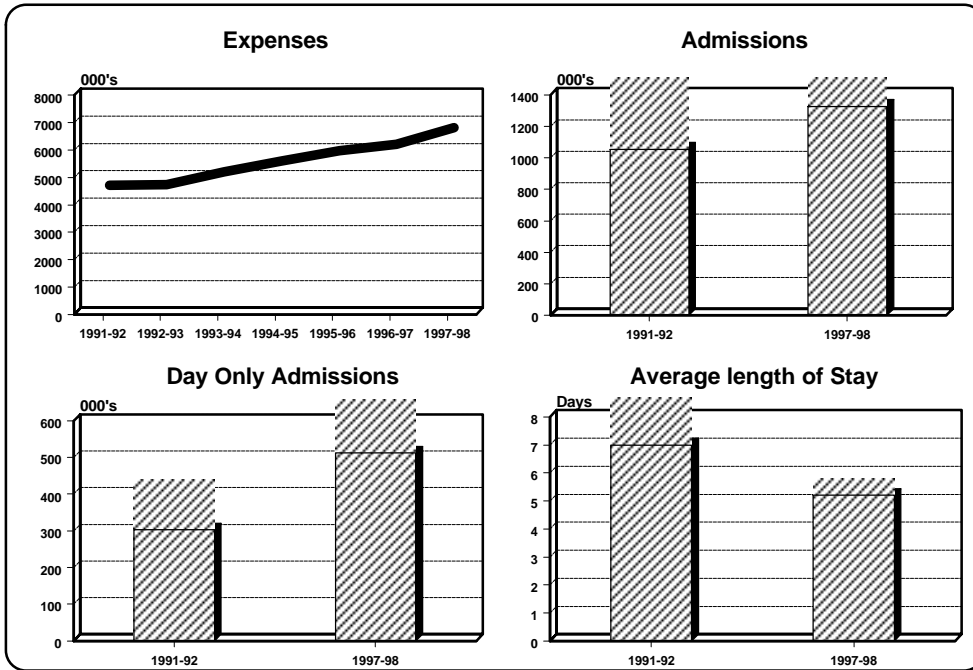
Consistent with the Government's commitment to improve efficiency across the system, together with the terms of several negotiated salary increases, the Department will be achieving better value for money through benchmarking in specified areas including administration and support services. These efficiencies will be achieved with no adverse impact on the delivery of services.

Expenditure Trends and Recent Developments

The NSW health system continues to experience increasing levels of activity due to the growth and ageing of the population, the availability of new treatments and rising community expectations. Demand pressures on the public health care system have been aggravated by declining private health insurance coverage which has fallen by over 2.3 per cent per annum in the last three years.

There has been a 25.5 per cent increase in admissions from 1.06 million in 1991-92 to an estimated 1.33 million in 1997-98. Day only admissions continue to increase and now represent 38.6 per cent of all admissions compared to 29 per cent in 1991-92.

The average length of stay has declined from 7 days in 1991-92 to an estimated 5.2 days in 1997-98, a reduction of 25.7 per cent over this period.



Strategic Directions

The Government released *Caring for Health - The NSW Government's Vision for Health*, in August 1995. The statement provides a comprehensive outline of the objectives and policy priorities which the NSW health system is now pursuing. Renewed emphasis is placed on meeting the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in the community.

The vision statement was followed in October 1995 by the Government's Economic Statement for Health which sets out a range of reforms which will be phased in over the next few years.

The following measures will be pursued in 1998-99 and ensuing years -

- arrangements for planning and funding specialty services will be further advanced;
- hospitals will be required to move towards the cost level of their efficient peer hospitals;
- casemix information will be used as a tool by Area Health Services for setting the budgets of hospitals; and
- improved networking of support services across Area Health Service boundaries will be implemented progressively.

The increasing demand on the public health system, coupled with a real deterioration in Commonwealth Medicare funding, continues to place significant strain on the public health system and, in particular, on waiting times.

Despite these pressures, the Department of Health will continue its efforts to reduce waiting times for patients in hospital emergency departments and for patients requiring urgent elective surgery and to reduce the number of patients waiting longer than twelve months for elective admission.

Capital Strategy

The 1998-99 capital program promotes asset strategies which complement the restructuring of services and aim to achieve an improvement in the system's capacity to meet increased demand while maintaining equity and quality of services. The program focuses on newer areas of high population growth but also addresses the condition of some older facilities to ensure the quality of care is maintained.

The need to reconfigure health infrastructure to adapt to changes in the pattern of care is recognised in the construction of new community health centres and in the redevelopment of facilities to support changing practices in mental health care. Similarly, the Budget recognises that particular areas within hospitals need to be upgraded or adapted to meet the ongoing demand for quality services and changes in how health services are delivered such as operating theatres, day surgery theatres, emergency departments and intensive care units.

The Budget provides funding for planning studies for some important new works. The Government has approved the Department of Health conducting planning and feasibility studies in 1998-99 into the relocation and upgrade of pathology services at John Hunter Hospital. In addition, the Department will undertake an economic appraisal and masterplan for the Prince Henry Hospital site to include a new Centre of Excellence for Aged Care and Rehabilitation and a new aged care hostel.

1998-99 Budget

Total Expenses

Budgeted 1998-99 total expenses will cater for -

- an estimated 1.33 million hospital admissions;
- over 20 million occasions of service across the whole NSW health system. On an average day, this equates to 80,000 people being treated and cared for including 20,000 people who will undergo inpatient treatment, 5,000 who will be cared for in emergency departments, 22,000 who will receive outpatient treatment and 31,000 who will receive non-inpatient services such as dental and community health services. In addition, ambulances will be sent out 2,000 times on any one day. These services will be provided by around 81,000 staff working in over 1,000 health facilities including hospitals, multi-purpose facilities, community health centres, early childhood centres and nursing homes;
- ambulance and aero-medical services, emergency care and surgery and sexual assault and mental health services which are accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;

- continued health improvement and promotion programs targeting health needs in areas such as: cardiovascular disease; AIDS awareness and prevention; suicide prevention; sun and skin protection; body image; prevention and control of infectious diseases; food safety; and monitoring of water and air quality; and
- continued investment in new technology and medical procedures that benefit patient treatment, care and recovery and improve general health.

Asset Acquisitions

The capital program allocation of \$457.9 million for 1998-99 provides for the continuation of major upgrading and redevelopment works at Blacktown/Mt Druiitt, Broken Hill, Central Sydney, Lower North Coast and Nepean, as well as the ongoing implementation of works for Aboriginal, rural and mental health.

Provision has been made for the commencement of the following major new works -

Project	1998-99 Allocation \$m	Estimated Total Cost \$m
Central Coast Area Health Service Strategy – Construction of Community Health Centres at Erina and Tuggerah and a Day Surgery at Wyong Hospital.	3.0	11.6
Illawarra Area Health Strategy Stage 2 – Replacement of Hickman House and refurbishment of the Services Building at Wollongong Hospital.	1.0	62.5
Hunter Strategy Stage 1 – Rebuilding of the Emergency Department and Intensive Care Unit at John Hunter Hospital, development of a Cancer Research Institute at the Newcastle Mater Misericordiae Hospital and planning for the upgrade of the Emergency Department at Belmont Hospital.	3.6	13.6
Wallsend Inpatient Unit - Consolidation of services into a new 15 bed inpatient facility at Wallsend Hospital.	1.0	4.3
Mental Health Strategy – Redevelopment of facilities to support the National Mental Health Strategy and delivery of priority mental health programs.	3.0	23.0
Northern Sydney Strategy – Upgrading of the Emergency Department, Intensive Care Unit and Operating Theatres at Royal North Shore Hospital and the Ryde Community Health Centre.	3.5	18.5
Sutherland Hospital Redevelopment – Replacement of the main ward block.	0.6	79.0

Project	1998-99 Allocation \$m	Estimated Total Cost \$m
Ambulance Strategy – Replacement of F Series ambulances and works on new, relocated and refurbished Ambulance Stations.	5.0	18.3
Information Management and Technology Strategy – Upgrading of the NSW Central Cancer Registry computer system and development work on Clinical Information Systems.	2.5	4.7

HEALTH CARE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

The Health Care Complaints Commission is a statutory body reporting directly to Parliament. The Commission has powers to investigate complaints against all health practitioners, hospitals, institutions and health programs.

The Commission is undertaking an organisational restructure based on both internal and external reviews conducted over the past four years. The restructure is aimed at streamlining the Commission's complaints handling and investigation processes, which should place the Commission in a position where it can respond to changing demands whilst maintaining an appropriate standard for complaint handling and containing the delay in investigations.

1998-99 Budget

Total estimated expenses for the Commission amount to \$5.0 million. The increase over 1997-98 is mainly due to the full implementation of the Patient Support Officer Program which facilitates the outreach and resolution focus of the Commission. Patient Support Officers are at seven locations throughout New South Wales.

NEW SOUTH WALES CANCER COUNCIL

The New South Wales Cancer Council is a statutory body, constituted under the *New South Wales Cancer Council Act 1995*. The Council is committed to working with the community to control cancer and enhance the quality of life of people living with cancer.

The Council funds research into the causes, prevention and treatment of cancer. The Council promotes prevention and early detection of cancer through education services to the community and provides information and support for patients, their families and carers.

The Council has estimated total expenses of \$23 million in 1998-99, which are primarily funded by donations from the community and grants.

NEW SOUTH WALES MEDICAL BOARD

The New South Wales Medical Board is a statutory body, constituted under the *Medical Practice Act 1992*.

The Board is primarily responsible for registration of medical practitioners and handling of complaints concerning medical practitioners. The principal aim of the Medical Board is to ensure that the people of New South Wales receive the highest possible standard of medical care.

The Board's operating environment will continue to be affected by factors such as legal activity, structural change within the health industry and the regulatory environment, and overseas skills recognition. The Board has estimated total expenses of \$3.7 million in 1998-99, funded primarily by registration fees.

DEPARTMENT OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs provides policy advice to the Minister and advisory services to the Government. The Department is committed to assisting Aboriginals in New South Wales achieve meaningful and sustainable improvements in their socio-economic conditions.

Through the provision of support to Government agencies, the Department seeks to maximise the effective delivery of Government programs and services, with an emphasis on improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

1998-99 Budget

Total Expenses

Estimated total expenses for 1998-99 are \$28.2 million. This includes the payment to the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, estimated to be \$13 million for 1998-99. This payment is calculated as 7.5 per cent of the previous year's land tax collections, a statutory requirement of the NSW Land Rights Act 1983 which commenced in 1984 and concludes in 1998.

Since the first payments were made in 1984, over \$500 million has been provided to the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, half of which has been invested in a statutory fund, the remainder being used for land councils' administration, maintenance of existing assets and purchase of land and related equipment. The payment in 1998-99 is the last payment the Council will receive from the NSW Government in accordance with the Act.

As part of the Government's commitment to redress the disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal people in social and economic areas, it is making available, over a seven-year period, \$200 million to the Aboriginal Communities Development Program. This program will provide funds to meet the demonstrated demand for adequate water, sewerage, housing and infrastructure needs for Aboriginal Communities across the State. For 1998-99, the estimate is \$10.75 million.

The Department will receive additional funding of \$0.3 million starting in 1998-99 for the Office of the Registrar of the New South Wales Land Rights Act. Four additional staff will be employed to coordinate and manage the Aboriginal Land Claims process and the Aboriginal Ownership Register.