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MORE ED BEDS IN BLIGH'S IPSWICH HOSPITAL UPGRADE

A \$6.7 million plan to upgrade the Ipswich Hospital Emergency Department is part of Premier Anna Bligh's major new \$250 million health building program which includes training a team of 30 nurse practitioners to work in the State's busy Emergency Departments.

Ms Bligh said new rehabilitation beds were also part of the plan to free up the State's busiest EDs with the total building program creating over 1000 new jobs.

Member for Ipswich Rachel Nolan and Member for Ipswich West Wayne Wendt MP today welcomed the announcement of a \$6.7 million expansion of the Ipswich Hospital Emergency Department as part of the overall health package.

"This is great. We get an extra six paediatric ED treatment bays as well as a paediatric treatment area," Mr Wendt said.

"This plan will help unclog our Emergency Departments and make them more efficient so they can treat more people living in the Ipswich area."

"The Bligh Government is delivering solutions to concerns raised by senior doctors and nurses about bottlenecks during peak times," he said.

Premier Bligh said the overall package of measures includes:

- ED upgrades totalling \$144.5 million in Brisbane, Logan, Redlands, **Ipswich**, Caboolture, Bundaberg and Toowoomba
- New designated areas for children and their parents to wait for treatment, away from adults who may be drunk or under the influence of drugs to be added to all new ED projects
- \$97.2 million for 89 more rehabilitation beds in Brisbane, Townsville and Rockhampton
- 30 new nurse practitioners with greater treating capabilities will work in EDs to cut down on waiting times at a cost of \$7.8 million
- Regulation change so that patients to be discharged by a registered nurse after the assessment and consent of a doctor

The Premier said the ED upgrades would deliver up to 76 new bays and beds across Queensland.



“These places will make a huge difference to these busy hospitals which are dealing with greater demand than ever before,” she said.

“Creating a designated area for young patients in all new ED units will also make an important difference to both staff and patients.”

The Premier said the plan to create up to 89 new rehabilitation beds for Townsville, Rockhampton and Sandgate will mean more patients can be transferred out of hospital and into facilities that better suit their needs.

Approximately 40 similar places were introduced to the Queensland Health system in Brisbane, Cairns, Townsville and the Gold Coast during the last 12 months.

“This plan will more than double the number of similar places in Queensland and help unclog our hospitals making them more efficient so they can treat more Queenslanders,” Ms Bligh said.

“These rehabilitation beds are about helping older and frail Queenslanders get out of hospital and move towards regaining their independence.”

The Premier said that on any night in Queensland public hospitals there are on average 450 beds occupied by aged and frail patients who would be better cared for in other facilities.

“Many of these patients would receive more appropriate care in special rehabilitation or transition care facilities where they would be supported in their return to home or to an aged care facility,” she said.

“Freeing up hospital beds by investing in more transition and rehabilitation beds, allows the beds to become available for patients requiring hospital admission following their treatment in an ED.”

Ms Bligh said the new team of 30 highly skilled nurse practitioners will make a massive difference to Emergency Departments across the State.

“The 30 new ED nurse practitioners will be trained and recruited over three years, starting with 10 in the next 12 months,” she said.

“They will be able to take on advanced tasks other registered nurses are not qualified to perform such as ordering x-rays and prescribing some medications.

“This will mean that patients with less serious cases will receive treatment sooner allowing doctors to focus on more complex and serious emergencies.”

The Premier said the decision to give registered nurses a greater role in discharging patients would be a boost to the professional development of the nursing workforce.

“They will be able to initiate a patient discharge from hospital after all appropriate care has been given to allow patients to return home sooner,” she said.

“This will further relieve bottlenecks in the system as beds are freed up more quickly.”

The ED upgrades total \$144.5 million and include:

- \$45.6 million at The Prince Charles Hospital for a new 12 bay Paediatric Emergency Department, 20 short stay paediatric ward and specialist outpatient clinics
- \$33.1 million expansion of the Logan Hospital Emergency Department including 18 adult treatment bays and dedicated paediatric waiting area and treatment bays
- \$13.6 million expansion of Redland Hospital Emergency Department including a helipad, four paediatric ED treatment bays and four consulting rooms
- \$15 million upgrade to the QEII Hospital Emergency Department including refurbishment to create a fast track/ambulatory care area and an observation area
- \$6.7 million expansion of the Ipswich Hospital Emergency Department including paediatric treatment spaces and six paediatric short stay observation beds
- \$5.2 million expansion of the Caboolture Hospital Emergency Department including five treatment bays dedicated paediatric space and improvements to patient privacy
- \$4 million at Bundaberg Hospital to enhance the new Emergency Department project by reconfiguring to improve patient flow and provide a patient discharge area
- \$2 million upgrade to the Toowoomba Hospital Emergency Department to improve discharge process through a new patient area

The rehabilitation/step down facility projects total \$97.2 million and include:

- 44 more rehabilitation beds at Eventide Sandgate in Brisbane
- 30 rehabilitation or step down beds at Parklands, Townsville
- 15 rehabilitation places at Rockhampton Hospital and outreach services to Yeppoon and Mt Morgan
- World-class online tool to assess elderly faster and more consistently and transitioned to more appropriate care using new technologies