

Transforming outpatient services

Progress Report and Year 2 Implementation Activities

2022-26



Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Health Tasmania respectfully acknowledges Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the traditional custodians of the land on which we live, work and play and pays respect to Aboriginal Elders past and present.

Recognition statement

Tasmanian Aboriginal people's traditional lifestyle promoted physical and emotional health and wellbeing, centred around Country, Kin, Community and Spirituality. Aboriginal people continue to value the importance of culture, community connection and being on Country as vital components of health and wellness. Through colonisation, Aboriginal people experienced displacement and disconnection, which has significantly affected their health and wellbeing. We recognise Aboriginal people are the

knowledge holders and provide best practice in promoting health and wellbeing for Aboriginal people. We acknowledge and learn from the ongoing work of Aboriginal organisations in ensuring continued health and wellness. We commit to working in partnership with Tasmanian Aboriginal communities and health leaders now and into the future to improve health and wellbeing.



Contents

The Strategy	4
What Happened in Year I	5
Year I Achievements	7
Completed Activities	7
Ongoing Activities	8
Year 2 Overview	9
Year 2 Initiatives	10
Streamlined Referrals	10
Enhanced Appointment Management	10
Year 2 Implementation	II
I. Care Delivery	II
2. Business Process Redesign	12
3. ICT & Virtual Care Capability	13
4. Service Development	15
5. Connecting Care	16
6. Monitoring and Reporting	17
7. Funding and Performance	17

Copyright notice and disclaimer

Copyright in this publication is owned by the Crown in Right of Tasmania, represented by the Department of Health.

Information in this publication is intended for general information only and does not constitute professional advice and should not be relied upon as such. No representation or warranty is made as to the accuracy, reliability or completeness of any information in this publication.

Readers should make their own enquiries and seek independent professional advice before acting on or relying upon any of the information provided.

The Crown, its officers, employees and agents do not accept liability however arising, including liability for negligence, for any loss resulting from the use of or reliance upon information in this publication.

© State of Tasmania November 2023

The Strategy

In 2022, the Department of Health released the Transforming public outpatient services four-year strategy, which provides the foundations for delivering sustainable change and transformation in outpatient care to meet the future needs of the Tasmanian community.

Through the strategy, we are changing the way outpatient services are delivered in Tasmania to better meet community needs. Improvements we are making will help strengthen the capability of the system, utilising technology and designing flexible delivery models to contribute to a sustainable, safe, integrated, and person-centred health system for Tasmanian communities.



Tasmanians have access to quality specialist outpatient services, at the right time, in the right setting, by highly skilled health practitioners and staff and enabled by digital technology and virtual care.

The Tasmanian Government announced additional funding in the 2023 State Budget to address growing outpatient care demand and reduce waiting times for public outpatient services.

Using the foundations we have built in the first year of the Strategy, this additional funding will allow us to further improve efficiencies, expand our service capacity and capability and continue supporting the healthcare system to plan for and respond to future health needs of Tasmanian communities.

What Happened in Year I

The first year of the Transforming Outpatient Services Four-Year Strategy (2022-26) has laid the foundations across a range of success measures.

Improved our care delivery



Delivered approximately 474,500 appointments.

Removed over 73 000 patients from the wait list after attending an outpatient service. This is an increase of over 4 000 removals compared to 2021-22.

Delivered more appointments in the following top performing Outpatients service specialties:

- Cardiology
- General Medicine
- Neurology
- Ophthalmology
- Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
- Rheumatology

Improved waitlist management

Contacted 37,135 people on the Outpatient waitlist to ensure their contact and health details are up to date and to confirm their appointment needs.



Reduced the number of people waiting longer than twelve months for their first appointment by 6 per cent.





Improved our business processes

Established Outpatient Central Services to provide a centralised statewide service for outpatient waitlist auditing and other business improvement strategies.

Improved business processes to strengthen the utilisation of telehealth and virtual care for outpatient services.

What Happened in Year I



Improved our digital capability

Achieved key milestones in the improvements of our digital health infrastructure through the successful implementation and rollout of eReferrals to all regions in Tasmania, with over 14,483 eReferrals received as part of the successful implementation.

We have purchased and commenced implementation of a new Outpatient Scheduling and Appointment Management System

Improved our facilities

Completed the fitout of the new Liverpool Outpatient Clinics at the Royal Hobart Hospital.

Completed the fitout of the new Women's and Children's Precinct (including maternity and gynaecology outpatient services) at the Launceston General Hospital.





Improved our service models

Introduced complementary care pathways, including the Nurse-led models of care in identified priority services and General Practitioners with Specific Interest (GPSIs).

Released our Long Term Health Plan for Healthcare in Tasmania 2040.

Year I Achievements

We set some ambitious targets for the first year of the four-year strategy and have made significant progress across a range of areas.

Completed activities

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	STATUS
THS Service Plan KPIs set	KPIs for the THS Service Plan are set annually, and in 2023-24, will include safety and quality measures for increased accountability and transparency.	✓ COMPLETED
Senior Clinical Advisory Group established	The Senior Clinical Advisory Group has been established and provides specialist clinical advice for the outpatient transformation program.	✓ COMPLETED
eReferrals introduced statewide	The eReferrals Referral Management System has been successfully implemented in all of our major hospitals, which is a significant step forward in our digital capability to enable outpatient transformation. A total of 144 General Practices have been onboarded statewide, with more scheduled in 2023-24.	✓ COMPLETED
Stages I and 2 of the Central Administration Hub established	The Central Administration Hub has been established, with waitlist auditing, call confirmations, inbound appointment cancellations and iPM data cleansing activities all now being undertaken from the new Outpatient Central Services hub located at Cambridge Park.	✓ COMPLETED
Additional Outpatients measures added to the HealthStats health system dashboard	New measures that report monthly data for Outpatient services are now publicly available on the HealthStats dashboard.	✓ COMPLETED
Introduce GPs with specific interest into outpatient service delivery	The pilot program has been set up with GPs with a specific interest placed in a range of outpatient clinics including paediatric, antenatal and mental health services.	✓ COMPLETED
Established Nurse-led models of care in identified priority services	We have established new nursing positions, including nurse practitioner training pathways, to develop and deliver nurse-led outpatient services for paediatrics, neurology, respiratory and cardiology.	✓ COMPLETED
Expand lower back pain triage and assessment services across the State	Lower back pain triage and assessment services have been expanded to the North and North-West of the State. The service commenced delivering appointments in May 2023.	✓ COMPLETED
Capacity planning tool developed	A high-level activity and funding model was developed in year 1 and in year 2 this will be refined to facilitate specialty-level capacity planning.	✓ COMPLETED

Year I Achievements

Ongoing activities

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	STATUS
Commence digitisation of waitlist letters	The digitisation of waitlist letters has commenced and will be fully integrated into existing systems in 2023-24.	✓ COMMENCED
Commence new care pathways for ENT outpatients	A Special Working Group has been established to provide advice, including expanding complementary care pathways delivered by audiologists, speech pathologists, paediatricians, and GPs with a specific interest.	✓ COMMENCED
Introduce early intervention allied health models of care for musculoskeletal conditions	The funding announced in the 2023-24 State Budget will increase access to evidence based musculoskeletal care pathways and implement multidisciplinary pain and rheumatology services. This initiative will help develop and implement alternative, evidence-based and cost effective care pathways and address known service gaps to the current, traditional medical and surgical models of care available in Tasmania.	✓ COMMENCED
New to review appointment benchmarking established	The new to review appointment benchmark is being established. The Outpatient Transformation Program team have been undertaking data analysis to inform which clinics to focus on for year 2 of the strategy.	✓ COMMENCED
Stages I and 2 of the Digital Outpatient Management System introduced	We have purchased and commenced implementation of a new Outpatient Scheduling and Appointment Management System that will streamline and standardised outpatient processes and workflows and enhance telehealth and virtual care capabilities.	✓ COMMENCED
Reduce the number of people not attending appointments to no more than 6%	We continue to reduce the number of people not attending appointments, with the North and North West regions meeting this target during 2022-23.	✓ ON TRACK
All patients added to a waitlist before 2019 will have been seen	In year I we have laid the foundations required to increase outpatient activity and deliver more appointments. We will progress this work in year 2, increasing our service capability to reduce the waiting list and to ensure that people are seen within clinically recommended times.	✓ COMMENCED
Evidence-based referral and prioritisation criteria embedded in eReferrals	The eReferral and Optimisation Program commenced in July 2023, with scope of works including a model to support the integration of evidence-based State-wide Referral Criteria (SRC). This new SRC model will be embedded in secure Referrer messaging solutions by the end of the financial year.	✓ COMMENCED

Year 2 Overview

Over the next twelve months we will continue to roll out initiatives commenced last year and start new programs that will give us more capacity to see more people and reduce waiting times. Our focus in the coming year is on the services where people are waiting the longest by developing new outpatient

services, providing more outpatient appointments, streamlining referrals and continuing to enhance our governance and business processes to provide high quality, sustainable, safe, integrated, and personcentred services for the Tasmanian community.



New Outpatient Services

We will develop a new statewide public specialised musculoskeletal service, providing evidence-based non-surgical care pathways for people with acute and chronic conditions affecting the musculoskeletal system, such as back and neck conditions, osteoarthritis and soft tissue conditions.

We will develop pain service for North West and Northern Tasmania, increasing access to specialist treatment and management advice for people living with persistent pain, helping to improve their quality of life and functionality.

We will expand access to specialist rheumatology services in the North West and Northern Tasmania for people with inflammatory joint and muscle conditions, complex multi-system connective tissue and vasculitis diseases, and metabolic bone disease such as osteoporosis.



More Outpatient Services

We will continue to optimise the use of all health professions to deliver outpatient services and provide additional resources for priority services including:

- GPs with a Specific Interest (GPSIs) working in paediatrics, antenatal and mental health services.
- Nurse-led models for respiratory, cardiology, neurology and paediatric services.
- More audiology services to support Ear, Nose and Throat specialist services.
- Advanced physiotherapy screening and treatment services for back and neck pain, complementing neurosurgery services.

Year 2 Initiatives



Streamlined Referrals

After introducing the new eReferral system in Year I, it will be expanded for use in additional services. Improvements will also be made to enhance the experience of health providers who use the system. This includes introducing referral and triage decision support tools for referrers.

We will expand the Outpatients Central Service, creating a central State-wide Referral Services hub to help streamline and improve referral systems and processes.



Enhanced Appointment Management

We will deliver a more efficient and patient centred process for managing outpatient appointment bookings by implementing our new appointment booking system and implementation of new and improved business processes for bookings.

We will consolidate our new waitlist management systems and processes, to support our clinicians to provide high quality health care.

Year 2 Implementation



I. Care Delivery

Design and deliver an efficient and person-centred central administrative service that enables high quality, efficient outpatient services and contemporary models of care.

ACTION	DESCRIPTOR	STATUS	MILESTONE
General Practitioner with Special Interest (GPSI) Evaluation	Continue to deliver the General Practitioner with Specific Interest (GPSI) initiative, with two interim evaluation points during 2023-24. The Outpatients GPSI Pilot Project, introduces an alternative workforce model for delivering specialist outpatient services to the community. Under this model, GPSIs are employed by the Tasmanian Health Service (THS) on a fractional, fixed-time basis, working as part of a specialty outpatient team by performing clinical duties as determined by the clinical lead of the unit. This project funds 2 full time equivalent (FTE) GPs for two years, providing up to 20 fractional appointments.	Commenced	December 2023 June 2024
Nurse-Led Models of Care	Continue to implement nurse-led models of care in identified priority areas, including supporting training of Nurse Practitioners to deliver outpatient services clinics, with two interim evaluation points during 2023-24. Nurse-led clinics offer innovative use of the nursing workforce that can facilitate timely access to specialist services. Funding has been provided for four nursing positions for respiratory, paediatric, cardiology and neurology services.	Commenced	August 2023 June 2024
Governance	Implement Phase I of revised governance systems to support Outpatient Clinics. To ensure that appropriate clinical and administrative governance systems are in place to guide clinicians and administrative staff who are responsible for the delivery of quality outpatient care, in year 2 we will realign our governance systems supporting outpatient clinics, in order to continuously improve health outcomes, minimise risk and promote an environment of excellence in service delivery for all patients in the Tasmanian public healthcare system. This will also ensure that Outpatient Services are aligned with our Department of Health governance structure within the new Hospitals and Primary Care portfolio and will further enhance statewide consistency in service delivery through the integration of our newly established Outpatient Central Services.	Commenced	December 2023
Service Initiatives	Utilise state funding to implement outpatient service initiatives	Commenced	January 2024



2. Business Process Redesign

Design and deliver an efficient and person-centred central administrative service that enables high quality, efficient outpatient services and contemporary models of care.

ACTION	DESCRIPTOR	STATUS	MILESTONE
Waitlist Management	Complete Waitlist Digitisation Project, including automation of waitlist auditing processes and notification to patients.	Commenced	October 2023
	Ensure not less than 95% of patients on the Outpatient wait list are audited by Outpatient Central Services every 6-months.	Commenced	Ongoing
	Implement the Vacant Appointment Management Project: Stage I – RHH Stage 2 – LGH and NWHS	Commenced	August 2023 February 2024
	Integrate Day One Digital (DID) and DMR.	Commenced	October 2023
Electronic Appointment Management	Continue implementation of SMS appointment confirmations for clinic notifications at appropriate clinics statewide: Stage I – RHH Clinics Stage 2 – North & all remaining Southern Clinics	Commenced	December 2023 June 2024
	Introduce SMS as the preferred method of communication for appointment notifications.	To commence	June 2024
	Redirect the majority of inbound telephone appointment requests to Outpatient Central Services.	To commence	June 2024
Referral Management	Implement a Statewide Referral Service within Outpatient Central Services.	To commence	October 2023 May 2024
Workforce	Develop and implement the Outpatient Administrative Staff Training Framework: Stage I – Outpatient Administrative Staff Training Framework to be endorsed Stage 2 – Commence implementation of Outpatient Administrative Staff Training program	To commence	August 2023 February 2024



3. ICT & Virtual Care Capability

Optimise the use of digital technology and virtual care to enable contemporary models of care and increase efficiency of business processes.

ACTION	DESCRIPTOR	STATUS	MILESTONE
Digital Outpatient Management Solutions	Implement Digital Outpatient Management Solutions. The new Digital Outpatient Management software will improve communication and empower patients to book and make changes to their outpatient appointments and access and manage their personal details, referral and appointment information and communication preferences. The Digital Outpatient Management System (Stage I) timeframe has been re-baselined. The project is targeting state-wide implementation by June 2024.	Commenced	December 2023 June 2024
eReferral Expansion and Optimisation Project	Initiation of the Expansion and Optimisation Project. The State-wide eReferral project is now completed with four major hospitals now utilising the eReferral solution for outpatient service referral management. The eReferral Expansion and Optimisation Project has now been initiated. The project aims to improve the user experience of the eReferral solution through various solution optimisations and expansion to a broader range of services. A pilot trial of the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) capability will also be produced at Northern Integrated Care Services (NICS), enabling the digitisation of scanned paper referrals directly into the system. The Referral Management System will be commissioned to the newly established State-wide Referral Services (a newly established centralised service). Through a new internal referral creation integration, users across the Department will have the ability to create outpatient referrals directly into the centralised electronic Referral Management System. This includes quick access integration links to support real-time electronic referral creation directly from Hospital Emergency Departments. Throughout the year, GP selectable outpatient services will be expanded across the state. This includes commissioning of the eReferral solution to eligible non-acute (community and primary health) services. Throughout the year, referral management operational reporting capability will be delivered to provide valuable operational visual insights. Various additional system usability enhancements to improve the user experience and simplify processes will also be introduced.	Commenced	December 2023 July 2024



3. ICT & Virtual Care Capability

Optimise the use of digital technology and virtual care to enable contemporary models of care and increase efficiency of business processes.

ACTION	DESCRIPTOR	STATUS	MILESTONE
Evidence-based Referral and Prioritisation Criteria	Introduce evidence-based referral and prioritisation criteria within into electronic solutions. Evidence-based referral and prioritisation criteria will provide an improved clinical communication tool between the GP and specialty consultants to improve patient triage and first appointment high value care. The first 3 specialties comprising of over 30 presenting conditions will be embedded in the eReferral smart forms by November 2023. All remaining 23 specialties, including over 400 specific conditions, will be embedded in the eReferral smart forms by 30 June 2024.	Commenced	November 2023 June 2024
Clinical Alerts Registration Project (CARP)	Implement an interim statewide solution for clinicians to enter clinical alerts directly and seamlessly. Implementing an integrated clinical alerts management system will provide synchronised alerts information across systems, maintain a source of truth accessible though routinely used systems (Digital Medical Record (DMR) or HCS Clinical Suite). This will enhance patient safety and outcomes, improve the quality and accuracy of alert information and comply with national standards.	Commenced	July 2023 November 2023
Virtual Care	Improve the provision of health services via Telehealth & Virtual Care Modalities. Year 2 will see further planning, development and implantation of the Virtual Care Program. This will include a review of the current telehealth workforce resources to support the use of Telehealth & Virtual Care Modalities across the health services. With a focus on the capabilities required to increase both clinician and consumer confidence and satisfaction in using technology to access care across the state.	Commenced	December 2023



4. Service Development With our partners, use research and evidence to plan and deliver system level service developments to increase access and quality of outpatient services to Tasmanian communities.

ACTION	DESCRIPTOR	STATUS	MILESTONE
Phase I Statewide Musculoskeletal Service	Year 2 will see the planning and development of a statewide musculoskeletal service. Service model design will be conducted in consultation with key stakeholders including the Musculoskeletal and Pain Clinical Network. Planning for the service has commenced in 2023.	Commenced	June 2024
	The utilisation of evidence based clinical pathways will enable patients to receive the most appropriate care for their condition, maximising their outcomes and reducing or removing their need for surgery. The statewide musculoskeletal and pain service will be a major contributor to providing early intervention and surgical avoidance care pathways across the state.		
Phase I Persistent Pain Services North / North West	The development of a pain service in the North West and North will occur in line with the development of the statewide musculoskeletal service. Recruitment to key positions will be one of the first steps to be undertaken as these roles will be essential to designing a fit for purpose service. Phase I will see the service model developed and key positions recruited to.	Commenced	June 2024
Phase I Rheumatology Service North / North West	Extending Rheumatology service provision to the North West and North of the state will improve access to services for Northern Tasmanians and increase the number of rheumatology appointments available. Phase I will see the service model developed and key positions recruited to.	Commenced	June 2024
Strengthen public/private partnership for outpatient services	By partnering with appropriately skilled and credentialled private providers, patients will have more timely access to the healthcare they require. This partnership will allow patients to receive the most appropriate care for their condition, maximising positive patient outcomes and helping to alleviate demand pressures on the waiting list to ensure people are seen within clinically recommended timeframes.	To commence	March 2024
Commence Statewide Cardiac Action Plan	The development of a Statewide Cardiac Action Plan has commenced to review and identify gaps in service delivery in accordance with the Tasmanian Role Delineation Framework and National Strategic Action Plan for Heart Disease and Stroke. Recommendations for funding and implementation will be through Tasmanian Cardiac Network and aims to strengthen services across the care continuum. A draft action plan is due to be completed by December 2023.	Commenced	December 2023
Implement Ear, Nose	Commence implementation of recommendations from ENT Special Working Group.	Commenced	June 2024
and Throat Service Improvements	An ENT Special Working Group provides specialist advice for ENT services in Tasmania. A series of recommendations have been developed to enhance the provision of ENT services, including strategies to address workforce challenges at a national level, and strategies to incorporate complementary care pathways to ENT outpatient services, such as audiology, speech pathology, paediatrics, and GPs with special interest.		
	Following approval of additional state funding, the Special Working Group will support the implementation of all recommendations which includes strategies to address the immediate challenges of accessing ENT outpatient appointments and elective surgery procedures which are contributing to the waiting list and number of patients waiting longer than clinically recommended.		



4. Service Development With our partners, use research and evidence to plan and deliver system level service developments to increase access and quality of outpatient services to Tasmanian communities.

ACTION	DESCRIPTOR	STATUS	MILESTONE
Infrastructure Development	Detailed masterplans that outline the planned infrastructure developments at each of Tasmania's major hospitals have been developed. Investments in health infrastructure will increase the capacity of outpatient services across the state and facilitate the introduction of innovative models of care.	Commenced	Ongoing
	Infrastructure developments completed during the first year of the strategy have included the fitout of a Women's Health outpatient service at the LGH and the refurbishment of new clinical spaces at Level 7, 59 Liverpool Street at the RHH. The Women's Health Service fitout provided infrastructure to support interdisciplinary collaboration, team-based patient management, delivery of group education and intervention, and the delivery of procedures in an outpatient clinic as an alternative to treatment in an operating theatre.		
	Since the completion of the refurbishment of the Liverpool Outpatient Clinics, some specialties moved into these larger clinical spaces in May 2023. Additional floors at this site will be refurbished during the next two years.		
	During year two of the strategy, a design brief that identifies a suitable permanent location for the Paediatric Outpatient clinic at the RHH will be finalised, with the aim of moving this service by 2025. Refurbishment of Blocks B, C, and D, and the construction of the additional Block E at the MCH will include expanded space for outpatient clinics.		



5. Connecting Care With our key partners Primary Health Tasmania and the Tasmanian primary care sector, support GPs and hospital-based specialists to better manage and connect the care needs of their patients.

ACTION	DESCRIPTOR	STATUS	MILESTONE
Communications Plan	Implement the Outpatient Transformation Communication Plan. The Outpatients Communications Plan will ensure key stakeholders are kept informed of key messages and critical milestones relating to the Outpatient Transformation Program. A public communications campaign will be released to inform the community on digital improvements to outpatient services in order to reduce the number of Did Not Attends (DNA) and clinic appointment cancellations.	To commence	September 2023 June 2024
Stakeholder Engagement	Facilitate monthly meetings with the Outpatient Transformation Program Operational Group and quarterly meetings with the Clinical Advisory Group.	Commenced	Ongoing
	Ongoing stakeholder engagement activities will aim to promote Outpatient Transformation Program initiatives with General Practitioners, Outpatient Clinical and Nursing Directors and Nurse Unit Managers, Primary Health Tasmania and the Tasmanian primary care sector to support GPs and hospital-based specialists to better manage and connect the care needs of their patients.		



6. Monitoring and Reporting

Drive improvements in quality, access and efficiency through data and information about activity, performance, outcomes and experience.

ACTION	DESCRIPTOR	STATUS	MILESTONE
Performance and Accountability Framework	Develop and implement a Performance and Accountability Framework for Clinical Nurse Consultants to Nurse Practitioners in order to measure and regularly report on progress against nurse-led model of care objectives that aim to reduce waitlist numbers.	Commenced	June 2024
	Develop and implement an Accountability Framework for General Practitioners with Special Interests (GPSIs) in order to measure and regularly report on progress against GPSI models of care objectives that aim to reduce waitlist numbers.	To commence	June 2024
	Review and improve information that is publicly released regarding Outpatient Services, including data published on the Outpatients Website.	To commence	June 2024
Evaluation Plan	Engage an external consultant to develop an Evaluation Plan for the Outpatients Transformation program. As outlined in the Four-Year Strategy, the evaluation plan will be multi-faceted and involve progress against the seven improvement streams, as well as the review and analysis of a range of structural, process and outcomes measures throughout the life of the Strategy.	Commenced	January 2024
	Activity and performance targets for THS service providers will be set annually in the THS Service Plan and will reflect the progressive improvements we expect to see as we lay the foundations for true service transformation.		
	A comprehensive evaluation plan will be built around the five key objectives of this strategy, to be approved and overseen by the Outpatient Transformation Steering Committee.		



7. Funding and performance Identify, develop and deliver purchasing and funding models that drive service innovation, improvement and efficiency.

ACTION	DESCRIPTOR	STATUS	MILESTONE
Local Outpatient Service Accountability Model	Establish a local Outpatient Service Accountability Model that monitors and actions waitlist and referral management, DNA's, clinic cancellations and vacant appointments at clinic level.	Commenced	December 2023
Point of Care Operational Model	Develop a Point of Care (POC) Operational Model for Tertiary led statewide services (such as Neurosurgery).	Commenced	October 2023
Capacity Planning Tool	Enhance the activity modelling and capacity planning tool. A high-level activity and funding model was developed in year I and in year 2 we will build on this work to refine the model to facilitate specialty-level capacity planning for service improvements to Outpatient Services.	Commenced	February 2024



