

## Elective Surgery Access Policy

<b>Effective Date:</b>	December 2009
<b>Review Date:</b>	December 2012
<b>Replaces:</b>	Management of Admission for Elective Surgery in Tasmanian Public Hospitals 01/06
<b>Custodian</b>	Strategy Co-ordination and Implementation Design

### Policy Statement

The policy of the Department of Health and Human Services is to improve waiting times for elective surgery through improved co-ordination and management of elective surgery waiting practices. The Elective Surgery Access Policy provides a comprehensive framework for the active management of the waiting lists where appropriately categorised and listed patients wait in turn for their surgery.

The policy requires patients on waiting lists to be prioritised according to clinical need, receive treatment in chronological order, have access to up-to-date information on their elective surgery and receive appropriate quality care regardless of which hospital they attend or where they live in Tasmania.

This policy is designed to assist hospital staff operate a safe, sustainable and equitable elective surgery management system that will maximise Tasmanian elective surgery patients outcomes. A documented and proactive approach to managing elective surgery waiting lists will help Tasmania's health services respond to these expectations.

### Scope

The Elective Surgery Access Policy will be designed to be used and easily understood by operational level hospital staff, surgeons in the public/ private hospital system and the general public.

This Access Policy framework consists of two complimentary documents that reflect the policy direction and principles of Tasmania's Health Plan, Tasmania's Elective Surgery Improvement Plan and the Commonwealth's Elective Surgery Waiting List Reduction Plan:

- This 'Policy' document.
- A separate detailed 'Improving time to treatment – Tasmania's Elective Surgery Access Policy' 'Framework' document

The Elective Surgery Access Co-ordination staff in collaboration with Directors of Surgery and Directors of Nursing will be closely involved in developing and co-ordinating the policy practices.

The guidelines to this policy should be equitably applied to all patients whether public or private, who have been wait listed at a public hospital.

## Objective

The revised policy supports Tasmania's commitment to elective surgery reform. The policy seeks to:

- provide a clear and future focused document that will guide the consistent statewide management of waiting lists.
- promote the implementation of best practice models for elective surgery waiting list management
- provide greater transparency for the process that determines access to elective surgery
- improve patient access through the active management and scheduling of patient waiting lists
- to consistently manage hospital and patient postponements, patients not ready for care and long waiting patients
- provide guidelines surrounding what information is appropriate and necessary to be sent to patients and general practitioners/clinicians
- provide clarity to the key patient pathway processes including the inclusion of patients requiring residential aged care and Aged Care Assessment Team referral.
- maintain the health of patients waiting for elective surgery
- provide authority for local policy and process development

Additional benefits of a new policy include: the inclusion of key co-ordinated reform strategies based upon best practice principles; the update of DHHS terminology that reflects new structural agreements and partnerships; and the availability of a clear, user friendly policy framework that will be used by existing and new elective surgery access co-ordination staff.

## Expected outcomes

The Tasmanian public hospital system is committed to ensuring all patients are treated in clinically recommended times.

To achieve this expectation, goals related to Elective Surgery Access and Key Performance Indicator's (KPI's) are incorporated into the Resource and Performance Agreements (RPA's) that are negotiated with Tasmania's major public hospitals on an annual basis.

Elective Surgery KPI's are reviewed annually in line with changing statewide priorities as well as against the national benchmarks for patient waiting times; admission times and hospital related postponements.

## Policy

This policy provides direction to service providers to facilitate consistency and improve access to surgery in Tasmania's public hospitals.

The policy development process provided the opportunity for all hospitals to look at ways of improving their business processes and the co-ordination of elective surgery services. The key principles underlying this Policy underpin the reform agenda contained within *Tasmania's Elective Surgery Improvement Plan (TESIP)* action priorities. Those principles are:

- Patient focus
- Patient information

- Patient consent
- Equity of access – ‘timeliness to surgery’ and ‘according to clinical need’
- Active and innovative management of waiting lists
- System wide co-ordination and collaboration
- Evidence-based clinical practice
- Performance management – ‘quality management’ , ‘risk management’ and KPI’s

These principles and the resulting processes will assist to achieve the strategic aims of providing timely, accessible and high quality patient centred services. In addition to these core principles, DHHS health services are required to maintain effective clinical and administrative structures that form a consistent and effective approach to elective surgery management.

## Rationale/Evidence Base

This policy replaces the March 2006 policy; *Management of Admission for Elective Surgery in Tasmanian Public Hospitals* and compliments the future policy direction, principles and reforms as outlined in *Tasmania’s Elective Surgery Improvement Plan 2008*. This revision of policy incorporated a statewide consultation process to ensure the operational efficiency and equity of the document. Elective Surgery Access Policy models from major states were analysed and consultation with the Victorian Department of Human Services was undertaken in the initial development of the policy framework.

Informed by this policy, an effective quality framework that continually evaluates existing practices and adopts evidenced-based innovation should become part of health services’ core business. Clinical expertise and a commitment to patient values are considered fundamental elements of the delivery of elective surgery services. An evidence based patient centred approach will assist to prevent the provision of treatments that may either cause harm or do not solve a health issue. This policy advocates for future protocols and pathways to facilitate patient’s access to effective non-surgical alternatives where appropriate.

All Australian states and Territories have revised their access policies to manage the increasing demand and complexity of elective surgery patients more effectively.

## Responsibilities/Delegations

This policy applies to all Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services employees and agents (including visiting medical officers and other partners in care, contractors, consultants and volunteers), involved in the delivery of elective surgery services and the co-ordination and maintenance of elective surgery waiting lists. As such the policy principles and operational guidelines in this document are considered best practice and should be adopted unless circumstances require otherwise.

The Secretary of DHHS and the Hospital Chief Executive Officers hold ultimate responsibility for ensuring the policy is enforced by DHHS hospitals and health services.

## **Audit and Compliance**

The Elective Surgery Access policy aligns with the standards and policies outlined in the following key Tasmanian and Commonwealth Government policies:

- Tasmanian Auditor Generals Report 2006 and Review 2009 – Elective Surgery in Public Hospitals
- Tasmania's Health Plan May 2007
- The Richardson Report
- The Commonwealth Elective Surgery Waiting List Reduction Plan

The Policy will be reviewed by **Strategy Performance and Planning** in collaboration with key hospital and appropriate non government organisations and stakeholders every three years.

## Related Documents/Resources

Tasmanian Elective Surgery Access Policy Framework 2009 and Complimentary policies listed below:

This framework accompanies the 2009 Elective Surgery Access Policy document and follows the future focus of *Tasmania's Elective Surgery Improvement Plan (TESIP) 2008*, *Tasmania's Health Plan 2007* and the *Commonwealth Governments Elective Surgery Waiting List Reduction Plan 2008 - 2011*.

This policy framework complements the following DHHS Strategy Planning and Performance policies and hospital policies:

- *The Admission and Discharge Policy (No.4/02)*
- *Request and Consent to Medical Procedure and Treatment Policy (No.3/03)*
- *Correct patient, correct site, correct procedure policy (07/08)*
- *Guidelines on Hospital Initiated Postponements (No.03/06)*
- *Clinical Risk Management Policy (No. 05/06)*
- *Complaints Policy (No.4/02)*
- *Patient Satisfaction Policy (No.13/97)*
- *Credentials and Clinical Privileges Guidelines (09/05)*

## Definitions

The Tasmanian Elective Surgery Access Policy Framework 2009 contains eleven pages of the key elective surgery definitions and a reference link to the National Health Data Dictionary.

## Attachments

Nil

**Please fill in the following fields for publishing to the DHHS Policy Repository  
To be filled out and submitted to the Document Manager for Publishing**

<b>Document Type*</b>	Access Policy
<b>Status*</b>	
<b>Effective Date*</b>	December 2009
<b>Review Date*</b>	December 2012
<b>Approved by</b>	Deputy Secretary Strategy, Planning and Performance
<b>Standards bound by</b>	
<b>Applies to*</b>	Staff and contractors involved in the delivery and management of elective surgery services
<b>Custodian/Review responsibility*</b>	Strategy Co-ordination and Implementation Design
<b>Category*</b>	Tasmania's Elective Surgery Improvement Plan
<b>Sub-category</b>	
<b>Group or AHA*</b>	<b>Strategy Co-ordination and Implementation Design</b>
<b>Departmental or operational unit</b>	<b>Strategy Planning and Performance</b>
<b>Policy ID*</b>	AHS00357

\* denotes mandatory fields