Overdue Elective Surgery List Plummets

The Territory Government’s initiative to reduce overdue elective surgery waiting lists has resulted in the removal of more than 1400 patients since March.

The Health Minister Chris Burns announced an initiative in April that targeted those waiting the longest for elective surgery.

Dr Burns said 1463 people or 91% of patients had been removed from the overdue surgery waiting list of 1612 by the end of August.

“This is good news for those who’ve been waiting the longest for elective surgery. I know how much worry any delays can cause, so I’m very glad the list has been cut so drastically,” he said.

“Of course, the list is not static and as patients are removed, others are being added.

“But even given that factor, our hospitals have achieved an overall reduction of 31% in the overdue list.

“When I announced this initiative in April, I hoped we could reach a target of 20%, so to exceed that figure is just a fantastic effort by our health staff.”

Dr Burns said of the 1463 people cut from the list, 803 received operations and 660 were removed for a variety of reasons including no longer requiring surgery or moving interstate.

He said the initiative cost $2.3 million and had finished at the end of August in all hospitals except Alice Springs where it will continue until the end of the year.

“The challenge in our other hospitals is to ensure we keep our elective surgery figures at reasonable levels,” he said.

The Territory Government has implemented several other initiatives that should help including:

- an extra 12 beds at both Royal Darwin and Alice Springs hospital this financial year
- a new ward at Royal Darwin Hospital
- a 24-bed Rapid Admission and Unit at RDH this year to help with patient flow
- 55 new nurses positions at RDH and ASH

Contact Andrea Adlam 0401 119467