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Health**The Hon. Wendy Edmond MP****20 November 2000****AMAQ "Report Card" recommendations
predictable**

The recommendations of the AMAQ's so called "report card" are predictable, Health Minister Wendy Edmond said today.

"The AMAQ's recommendations are based on the opinions of a select group of only 144 doctors. This is disappointing when there are more than 11,500 doctors registered in Queensland, of which 3,600 work in the public hospital system," Ms Edmond said.

"The calls for a taskforce and a Statewide audit of bureaucracy are irrelevant and not representative of the needs of those who use the system.

"We are already working hard with all health professionals, not just doctors, to bring real, enduring improvements to our public hospital system.

"Queensland already has one of the most comprehensive reports on elective surgery waiting lists that is published quarterly, hospital by hospital, category by category and specialty by specialty.

"The most important feedback is from the people who use the public hospital system - the patients.

"Our public health facilities give patients the opportunity to rate their satisfaction with that facility.

"The feedback we receive shows that more than 90 per cent of patients are happy with the service they receive in public hospitals. This is in line with the results of a recent State survey by The Sunday Mail.

"Every day in Queensland we treat more than 30,000 patients in the public hospital system. (7,000 inpatients and 21,000 outpatients on top of 1,850 patients treated in accident and emergency and 930 people who receive hospital day-only procedures).

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"Every day in Queensland \$10 million is spent on public health services.

"I commend the dedicated and hard working staff who provide these services to the people of Queensland every day.

"Predictably, the AMAQ's report calls for more money and offers advice from a select group of doctors on how it should be spent.

"My first priority will always be to ensure that all Queenslanders have access to the best available health services," Ms Edmond said.

Further information: Shari Armistead 3234 1190

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Health & assisting the Premier on Women's Policy
The Hon. Wendy Edmond MP**6 May 2003****Best ever elective surgery waiting list**

The March Quarter waiting list result Statewide is the best ever and Health Minister Wendy Edmond said today she was proud of the effort that frontline health staff have put in to achieve this.

Even before these results came out, the Australian Productivity Commission found Queensland had the best elective surgery performance in the country.

Last year 4300 more patients received elective surgery than the year before.

The Coalition Government flatly refused to publish waiting lists, hospital by hospital, across the State, which this Government does every three months.

The March Quarter result shows Statewide 98 percent of Category 1 elective surgery patients received their treatment within the recommended 30 days.

Some 93 percent of Category 2 elective patients received their surgery within the recommended 90 days.

Category 1 and 2 patients are the patients who doctors say are the more urgent or semi-urgent cases.

The latest published data shows there are 1700 less people on the Category 3 (non urgent) waiting list at 1 April 2003 than there were at the same time four years ago.

"However, I have acknowledged that waiting times are too long for many non-urgent elective surgery conditions, which while not life-threatening, do affect quality of life," Ms Edmond said.

"That's why we are putting in place a number of strategies to deal with this.

"For example, last weekend I announced an enhanced role for optometrists in treating eye conditions."

Media contact: Steve Rous 3234 1185

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Health & assisting the Premier on Women's Policy
The Hon. Wendy Edmond MP**3 June 2003****\$10 Million targets reduced elective surgery waiting Lists**

Queensland Health will continue to address waiting times for elective surgery with a \$10 million allocation in the 2003-04 State Budget, Health Minister Wendy Edmond said today.

"The Budget strategy this year targets general surgery as well as the surgical specialty areas of ophthalmology, orthopaedics, ear, nose and throat, neurosurgery, gynaecology and plastic and reconstructive surgery," she said.

"The recent Australian Productivity Commission report found Queensland had the shortest waiting times for elective surgery and the Beattie Government is determined to maintain the effort.

"Under this Government, waiting lists are being managed through better cooperation between hospitals across the State so that, in some instances, patients can be transferred to another hospital which offers more timely treatment in a particular speciality.

"Some hospitals have formed working partnerships for services and doctor sharing, so that more patients are offered timely treatment.

"Waiting lists for urology, ear, nose and throat, ophthalmological, orthopaedic and vascular surgery have been reduced at a number of hospitals through these kind of partnership agreements and sharing arrangements," she said.

Ms Edmond said the record \$4.6 billion for health in the State Budget was a 6.9 per cent or \$300 million increase on last year's Budget.

Media inquiries: Steve Rous and Ruth Evans on 3234 1191

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Health & assisting the Premier on Women's Policy
The Hon. Wendy Edmond MP**26 August 2003****Health Minister Wendy Edmond to retire at next election**

Health Minister and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy Wendy Edmond announced today that she would not be standing for re-election at the next Queensland poll.

Ms Edmond, who has been a Minister for six years and a Member of Parliament for 14 years, said she wanted to spend more time with her family and pursuing other interests.

She is now Australia's longest serving Health Minister.

"I still thoroughly enjoy my work as a politician and I am proud of what I have been able to achieve for my constituents and in my portfolios," Ms Edmond said.

"But I believe there is a limit to how long anyone can regularly work very long hours each day, and be available whenever required seven days a week to deal with some very hard issues.

"Flagging my retirement now is the right thing to do by my electorate, my party and the Government."

Ms Edmond was appointed to Cabinet in the Goss Government in 1995 and served as Minister for Employment and Training and Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Service Matters.

When the Beattie Government was elected in June 1998, she was appointed to the tough Health portfolio.

"I will be staying on to the next election to bed down the implications of a new five-year Australian Health Care Agreement.

"I also will be setting in train the implementation of the Health 20/20 project, which gives Queensland the chance to build a sustainable health system well into the future.

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"Politics has been a huge part of my life and I will miss it and, more importantly, I will miss the wonderful people with whom I have had the pleasure of working in Brisbane and around the State."

Ms Edmond, who grew up in Bundaberg and now lives in Ashgrove, has represented the Brisbane seat of Mount Coot-tha since 2 December 1989.

Ms Edmond is a former nuclear medicine technologist, who completed her early radiotherapy training at the Queensland Radium Institute and worked at the Holy Spirit Hospital and the Royal Brisbane Hospital. In the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, Ms Edmond worked in hospitals around Australia and around the world, including Montreal, Copenhagen, New York and Edinburgh.

Significant achievements in the Health Portfolio since 1998

- * Delivered six consecutive record health budgets. By 2006-07 the Health Budget will be about \$5.4 billion - more than \$1 billion or about 25% more than in 2002-03. Compared with when we were elected, funding to Queensland Health will have risen by a staggering 70 per cent by 2006-2007.

- * Delivered on time and on budget Labor's 10-year \$2.8 billion Statewide Health Building Program, the largest of its type ever undertaken in Australia. This has resulted in the re-equipping and rebuilding of 150 hospitals, community health and mental health facilities across the State.

- * Having Queensland acknowledged by the Australian Productivity Commission as having the shortest waiting lists for elective surgery in the country. For the first time in Queensland, under the Beattie Government elective surgery waiting lists have been made publicly available, hospital by hospital, across the State.

- * Implemented the \$28 million Queensland Radiation Oncology Services Plan, which has resulted in Queensland having world-class cancer treatment services and technology.

- * Successfully lobbied the Commonwealth for the approval of two new Medical Schools at Townsville and the Gold Coast.

- * Successfully lobbied the Commonwealth to increase the number of radiation therapist graduates from QUT from 2004.

- * Implemented Labor's school youth health nurse

program which now sees 120 specially trained nurses reaching more than 150,000 students in 241 high schools across the state. These nurses help students address issues such as body image, alcohol and drug use, and sexual health.

- * Undertook Queensland's first trial of Nurse Practitioners, which is currently being assessed with a view to expansion.

- * Established and implemented all of the recommendations of the Queensland Nursing Recruitment and Retention Taskforce. This has resulted in greatly improved recruitment and retention rates for nurses across the State. The Beattie Government's commitment to employ 1500 graduate nurses over three years has been exceeded, with 1,789 new graduates employed by QH since 2001.

- * Initiated Queensland's Doctors for the Bush Scheme to address doctor shortages in rural and remote areas. More than 20 rural and remote communities now have a stable medical presence thanks to this scheme.

- * Achieved the biggest overhaul of State Health legislation ever, including the introduction and passage of the Mental Health Act 2000 which for the first time in Queensland strikes a balance between caring for people with a mental illness and protection for the community, victims and their families. In five years the front-line mental health workforce has been increased by more than 400 staff.

- * Introduced the provision of free needles for Queensland's 23,000 insulin dependent diabetics.

- * Introduced on a State-wide basis the Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) which now provides free parenting programs to thousands of Queensland families.

- * Appointed a network of nutritionists to assist families, including families in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, to eat healthy food and be aware of how their diet affects their health.

- * Drove the Health 20/20 project which provides a blueprint for a sustainable Queensland public health system into the 21st Century.

Media Inquiries: Steve Rous 3234 1185

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Premier & Trade**The Hon. Peter Beattie MP****21 October 2003****35% Improvement In Waiting Times For Semi-Urgent Patients**

Doctors, nurses and hospital administrators have slashed waiting times for patients needing semi-urgent operations, Premier Peter Beattie and Health Minister Wendy Edmond announced today.

The figures for the second quarter of 2003 show that for the first time ever, 95 out of every 100 category two patients (semi-urgent) were receiving their elective surgery within the targeted 90 days," said Mr Beattie.

"Six years ago the government of which Mr Springborg was a Member believed it could do no better than aim to give 60 out of 100 category two patients their operations within the 90 days recommended by doctors," said Mr Beattie.

"A Cabinet Submission shows that in January 1997 38.5 per cent of category two patients waited too long for surgery and that by December 1997, the situation had become worse, with 40.5 per cent were waiting too long.

"In February 1998 the Coalition Government, having seen waiting times blow out to more than 40 per cent of patients waiting too long, gave up on the target of trying to treat 95 per cent of category two patients within the clinically-recommended 90-days.

"Cabinet decided that in future the Government would aim to treat 60 per cent of category two patients within 90 days and published this new target in the Government's State Social Development Strategy.

"We returned to a target of 95 per cent of category two patients receiving their operations within 90 days. The fact that our hospitals have managed this tremendous turn-around is a great credit to them and to Health Minister Wendy Edmond.

"The figures are the best result since records began in 1996.

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"I would expect the figures for the third quarter to be not quite as good as these because the winter months can see elective surgery take a back seat to medical cases caused by winter ills. But I am very encouraged by our results."

The latest independent Productivity Commission report (for 2001) found;

- We had the shortest waiting times for elective surgery in the country;
- We had the most efficient hospital system;
- Only three people in every hundred had to wait longer than a year for an operation in Queensland compared with four in every 100 nationally;

The latest Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Report (June 2003) for the year 2001-02 says:

- Patients on orthopaedic waiting lists did best in Queensland, with half of them being admitted within 24 days in comparison with 168 days in Tasmania;
- Half the patients needing an operation on the septum (nose) in Queensland were admitted within 59 days, compared with 228 days in Tasmania and 309 days in the Northern Territory

"By July 1, this year 98 out of every 100 patients on the category 1 (urgent) waiting list had their surgery on time," said Ms Edmond.

"In the 1997-98 year 89,932 public patients received elective surgery compared with 97,235 in the 2002 - 2003 year.

"And despite treating thousands of extra public patients, overall the number of people on the waiting lists is 1,200 less now than it was in 1998.

"It is a fact that elective surgery comprises only 15 to 20 per cent of a hospital's activities but the public perception is that dealing with elective surgery is the best measure of the efficiency of hospital systems."

Contact: Steve Bishop 07 3224 4500

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Premier & Trade**The Hon. Peter Beattie MP****23 November 2003****Report Highlights Queensland's World-Class Health System**

Premier Peter Beattie said a report into Queensland's Public Hospital System he released today proves the State's doctors, nurses and health professionals have made it one of the best in the world.

"I want to make sure we get some hard facts and figures into the debate on health, that is why I have released The Queensland Health Report to highlight the first-class performance of our hospital system," Mr Beattie said.

"Taxpayers have the right to know how well the system is performing.

"All we ever hear from the knockers is half-truths about waiting lists and funding, I want to get the full story out there and this report will do that.

"This report also gives our doctors and nurses and health professionals a well-deserved pat on the back, which is something our opponents aren't doing.

"I thank our doctors, nurses and health professionals for their hard work and dedication."

Mr Beattie said the official facts and figures show that the Smart State has come a long way since Coalition Leader Lawrence Springborg was a Minister:-

- Last year there were 7,000 more elective surgery operations on public hospital patients than in 1997-98 when Mr Springborg was a Minister.

- Despite treating thousands of extra public patients, the number of people on the waiting lists is 2,232 less now than it was when Mr Springborg was a Minister.

"My Government is playing its part by spending about 50 per cent more on health than when Mr Springborg was a Minister.

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"What does it mean for Queenslanders?

"It means if you need hospital treatment you will receive it sooner than you would have five years ago - and thousands more people are being treated.

"Don't just take my word for it. The latest independent Productivity Commission report found we have the shortest waiting times for elective surgery in the country and that we have the most efficient hospital system.

"But one patient waiting too long for surgery would be one patient too many," Mr Beattie said.

Mr Beattie said Queensland has one of the best hospital systems in the world but the important thing now is to continue to work hard to make further improvements.

He said there are many issues to deal with including:

- New cures and new treatments bringing new costs;
- An ageing population putting more pressure on health services;
- The need for Federal Government to play its part with bulk billing and GPs.

"I want to work with Canberra to fix problems. Three times I have asked Mr Springborg to stop playing politics and join me in fighting Canberra for a better health deal for Queensland. And three times he has refused.

"We can't risk a return to the days when Mr Springborg was a Minister and the hospital figures were so bad that Cabinet hid them away from public view."

Mr Beattie said his Government would continue to make all the waiting times for operations totally open to scrutiny at
<http://www.health.qld.gov.au/publications/eswlr.pdf>

A fact sheet on the performance of Queensland's world-class health system is attached.

Media contact: Anne Syvret 32244500

FACTS AND FIGURES ON QLD'S WORLD-CLASS PUBLIC HOSPITALS

Queensland Public Hospitals are World Leaders

FACT - Official reports and figures show that Queensland Public Hospitals rank among the best in the world. The latest independent Productivity Commission report found we have the shortest

Lower Waiting Times for Operations

FACT - Official Health Department figures show that 99.9 per cent of the most urgent emergency patients arriving in our accident and emergency departments (category 1) in the June quarter were seen immediately by a doctor. And only 3% of category 2 emergency patients are not seen by a doctor within the national target. When Mr

Springborg was a Minister, statistics on waiting times were hidden from the public.

Record Budgets

FACT - Since coming to office we have delivered record health budgets. This year we are spending about 50 per cent more on health than when Mr Springborg was a Minister.

FACT - Independent figures from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare show that between 1997-98 and 2000-01, total health spending in Queensland increased by an average of 5.8% a year compared to the national average over the same period of 4.9%.

New hospitals

FACT - We have completed a \$2.8 billion Hospital Rebuilding Program to provide world-standard hospitals throughout Queensland.

Mr Springborg Refuses to Fight for our Hospitals

FACT - When Mr Howard admitted slashing Federal funding for our hospitals, Mr Springborg refused a request from Premier Peter Beattie to join him in the fight to restore Queensland's proper share of funding.

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Premier & Trade**The Hon. Peter Beattie MP****25 November 2003****Opposition Fails To Find Any Errors In Health Report**

The Opposition has failed to find any errors in a report which shows that Queensland's doctors, nurses and health professionals have made the State's health system one of the best in the world, Premier Peter Beattie said today (Tuesday).

Premier Peter Beattie tabled the Health Report in Parliament today and congratulated doctors, nurses and health professionals for their achievement.

"Last year they enabled more than 97,000 patients to receive elective surgery operations in our public hospitals," said Mr Beattie.

"That is 7,000 more than the last year when Mr Springborg and Mr Quinn were Ministers.

"And despite thousands of extra public patients, the number of people on the waiting lists is 2,232 less now than it was when Mr Springborg and Mr Quinn were Ministers.

"No wonder the Opposition has criticised the report.

"But importantly, not one of the facts and figures has been shown to be inaccurate.

"That is the test of this report.

"And despite having had access to the report since Sunday, neither Mr Springborg nor Mr Quinn asked me one question about it today.

"That is because the Health Report is not a collection of opinions, beliefs and half-truths.

"It is a collection of checkable facts, each one of them sourced.

"There are well over 100 facts and figures from independent, official and reliable sources which show that our doctors, nurses and health

professionals have made huge advances over the past five and a half years.

"Queensland's health system has been judged by the independent Productivity Commission to be the most efficient in Australia and to have the shortest waiting lists.

"Anyone seeking to discredit this Report will have to discredit organisations such as the federal Productivity Commission, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development whose findings are used in this report.

"But the Health Report doesn't just collect positive facts and figures.

"It also examines some of the problems - problems which have also been identified by the AMA in the Official Communique of the Australian Health Care Summit from August this year.

"In August the AMA backed the finding that the Federal Government's funding offer to the states, in which Queensland had \$160 million in health funding taken by the Coalition Government, was 'seriously flawed'.

"And the Report makes it plain that while one patient has to wait too long for an operation, that is one patient too many.

"It might be one of the best health systems in the world but it is not perfect.

"There is much more work to be done.

"My Government is playing its part by spending about 50 per cent more on health than when Mr Springborg and Mr Quinn were Ministers.

"I want to work with Canberra to fix problems.

"Three times I have asked Mr Springborg to stop playing politics and join me in fighting Canberra for a better health deal for Queensland.

"And three times he has refused.

"My commitment is that if we are re-elected, we will continue to provide record funding for Queensland Health.

"And we will continue to outperform the low standards set when Mr Springborg was a Minister."

Media contact: 3224 4500

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Premier & Trade**The Hon. Peter Beattie MP****17 January 2004****Beattie Pledges Independent Audit For
Hospital Waiting Lists**

Premier Peter Beattie said today he will introduce an independent audit of public hospital waiting lists.

"If we are re-elected, our hospital waiting lists will be independently audited," Mr Beattie said.

"This answers a question posed by the Queensland branch of the Australian Medical Association (AMAQ).

"This government is proud of what doctors and nurses have achieved in cutting waiting times to record lows and has nothing to hide on waiting lists.

"Only doctors can place patients on waiting lists and our data is collected and scrutinised in exactly the same way as when Mr Springborg was a Minister.

"But there are still patients who have to wait too long so there is more that needs to be done.

"Today I am announcing that we are committing to: invest \$77 million in building a general emergency department and adding 120 beds at Prince Charles Hospital; employ another 1500 graduate nurses across Queensland over the next three years; and spend \$15 million improving cardiac health services over the next three years.

"We are the first Queensland Government to publish waiting lists - something we have been doing every quarter since coming to office, in line with a 1998 election promise.

"The independent Productivity Commission says Queensland now has Australia's shortest waiting times.

"Yesterday the AMAQ asked for an answer by Friday 23 January - we are responding within 24 hours of receiving the AMAQ question.

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Premier & Trade**The Hon. Peter Beattie MP****22 January 2004****\$110m To Further Reduce Waiting Times For Elective Surgery After Record Year**

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Proserpine: A re-elected Beattie Government would commit a massive \$110 million over the next three and a half years to further reduce elective surgery waiting times, Premier Peter Beattie announced today.

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Mr Beattie said the new funding would be used to treat about 18,000 extra elective patients on time, with \$20 million of it being available immediately to address elective surgery backlogs before July 2004.

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"This follows a year when Queensland's doctors, nurses and health professionals have achieved their best results on record," said Mr Beattie.

"In 2003 they:

- Met the national target of treating 95% of urgent patients within 30 days - which they have done in every quarter since 1998
- Recorded the shortest waiting times for semi-urgent patients ever, with 92.5% of patients getting their surgery on time
- Lowered the number of people on waiting lists from 36,260 in 1998 to 33,240 at December 31, 2003 - the lowest figure on record.

"Our last Budget allotted 50% more on health than the previous Government, but this new initiative will be the biggest effort to reduce elective waiting lists Queensland has ever seen.

"The independent Productivity Commission has examined each state's public hospitals and says Queensland's system is the most efficient and that we have achieved the shortest waiting times," said Mr Beattie.

"I thank our doctors, nurses and other health professionals for their achievements.

"But while there is one person waiting too long for an operation, we have to do more.

"And that is what this policy will do. It will make

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- Over the next three and a half years, a re-elected Beattie Government will spend \$110 million to cut waiting list times through initiatives such as:

- \$47 million for general distribution across Queensland's public hospital system, based on demand for surgery across the state

- \$7.5 million for an extra 3,000 cataract operations shared with the private sector, and two additional ophthalmology specialist training positions

- \$15 million for an extra 900 joint replacement procedures across the state, including hip replacements and knee reconstructions

- \$3 million for additional orthopaedic surgery, especially joints, on the Sunshine Coast at Noosa Hospital

- \$6 million to commission a second operating theatre at Caloundra Hospital and 10 extra beds.

"With the \$20 million immediate spend, we will ask private sector hospitals to partner with us to help address the elective surgery backlog where public hospitals are at capacity," Mr Beattie said.

Mr Beattie said the bid to reduce the waiting time for elective surgery will be complemented by policy initiatives already announced, such as:

- The employment of 1500 extra nurses
- A \$15 million boost to cardiac services
- A specialist Ear Nose and Throat surgeon at Cairns Hospital
- Building an Emergency Department and providing 120 new beds at Prince Charles Hospital in Brisbane.

"These will all have a combined impact on helping to slash waiting times," Mr Beattie said.

"While these announcements are new money, it's not a new direction.

"The simple fact is we are treating more patients now than in 1998," Mr Beattie said.

Mr Beattie said his government had continued to deliver on a promise to publish elective surgery waiting lists each quarter, and would continue to do so.

January 22, 2004

Contact - Steve Bishop 0419 779 518

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Premier & Trade**The Hon. Peter Beattie MP****1 February 2004****Official Figures For Surgery Waiting Times**

Official fourth-quarter figures published today show that waiting times for urgent and semi-urgent elective operations in Queensland's public hospitals for 2003 are the best ever for a calendar year, Premier Peter Beattie announced today.

"Taken with the other quarterly figures for 2003 released regularly on the Internet, the figures show our doctors, nurses and health professionals achieved the best waiting times for a calendar year," said Mr Beattie.

"But we must do even more because there are still some people waiting too long for operations, especially in the non-urgent category.

"That is why, if we are re-elected, we will spend \$429.75 million over three years on a range of major measures to further improve the public health system.

"This news follows last week's report from the Federal Government's Productivity Commission which showed we had the best waiting times and the most efficient hospital system in the country for 2001-02.

"I congratulate our doctors and nurses and everybody else involved in our hospitals for these tremendous achievements.

"The official figures for the four quarters of 2003 show:

- 97% of category one (urgent) patients received their operations in the 30-day period recommended by doctors, compared with 96% in 2002; and
- 92% of category two (semi-urgent) patients received their operations in the 90-day period recommended by doctors, compared with 86% last year.

"But people should remember that last year 116,490 Queenslanders were given the operations they needed in our public hospitals - the vast

majority of them on time.

"That's 116,490 reasons why our public hospital system is regarded so highly.

"We have always managed to achieve our target of treating at least 95% of category one (urgent) patients on time.

"But the best year on record for category two (semi-urgent) patients was 2000 when we managed to treat 90% of patients in the recommended time.

"Once again, my congratulations to our doctors, nurses and all our health professionals.

"The fourth quarter figures to be posted tomorrow show 95 per cent of category one operations were carried out on time in the three-month period and 90 per cent of category two operations were carried out on time in the three-month period.

"In the three months to December:

- Only two of 32 major hospitals - Princess Alexandra and QEII - failed to treat 95% of category 1 patients within 30 days;
- Bundaberg, Hervey Bay and Mackay all improved the ratio of category 2 patients being treated on time compared with the same three months the previous year;
- Nambour increased the number of category 2 patients operated on compared with the same three months the previous year - from 219 to 334.

"If re-elected, we will help hospitals further improve the system by spending:

- \$110 million for a new drive to further reduce hospital waiting lists for an extra 18,000 people to have elective surgery sooner;
- \$75 million to guarantee employment to 1500 new nurse graduates;
- \$34.5 million on testing a system where bulk-billing GPs will run clinics next to busy hospitals; easing the pressure on emergency departments by employing more emergency staff; and helping patients find a doctor in their area by setting up a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week, state-wide Health Hot Line;
- \$15 million for improved access to cardiac services at Cairns, Townsville, Gold Coast and Brisbane, both at Prince Charles, Royal Brisbane and PA hospitals;
- \$8.25 million for state-of-the-art cancer-fighting equipment and \$31.5 million extra each year for specialist cancer staff and services;
- \$100 million on a package to help further improve ambulance response times, with at least 240 extra paramedics, 22 new and improved

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stations and 200 new and improved ambulances;
- \$88 million for 112 extra beds in a redeveloped Mater Mothers' and Adults' Hospital (Brisbane)
- \$10 million to provide at least 18,000 extra free dental treatments to pensioners, children, students and families in areas with the longest waits;
- \$77 million on establishing a full-scale emergency department and adding 120 beds at The Prince Charles Hospital."

The figures are available at:
www.health.qld.gov.au

Contact: Steve Bishop 07 3224 4500
February 1, 2004.

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Premier & Trade**The Hon. Peter Beattie MP****3 February 2004****Beattie's Vision And Plan For Healthier
Queenslanders**

A re-elected Beattie Labor Government will have the vision and the plans to continue improving hospitals and health services for Queenslanders, now and into the future.

Premier Peter Beattie today praised our doctors, nurses and other health professionals for delivering outstanding results year after year.

"We have a world-class health system, including the shortest elective surgery waiting times in Australia. However, the community expects an even better level of service and a re-elected Beattie Government will deliver," Mr Beattie said.

"We are ready to meet the many challenges of providing excellent services to a rapidly-growing population in an environment where health care costs are rising steeply and the Federal Government is refusing to play its part."

Our challenges include:

- Maintaining affordable and accessible health care at a time when the Federal Government is dismantling Medicare and putting bulk-billing GPs out of the reach of thousands of Queenslanders
- Easing the growing pressure on our emergency departments which this attack on Medicare has caused
- Delivering more on-time elective surgery and improving our waiting list performance that, according to the Productivity Commission, is already the best in Australia
- Addressing an increasing prevalence of chronic diseases such as diabetes and cancer, partly as a result of our ageing population
- Adopting new technologies and continuing research for early diagnosis, treatment and prevention

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- Invest \$100 million in the Queensland Ambulance Service, including recruiting at least 240 extra paramedics."

The detailed policies on each of these initiatives are attached.

Media contact: Steve Bishop 0419 779 518
3 February 2004

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Health**The Hon. Wendy Edmond MP****26 April 1999****Townsville hospital maintains excellent waiting list record**

Draft Joint Statement By Health Minister Wendy Edmond & Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier in North Queensland and Member for Townsville Mike Reynolds

Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier in North Queensland and Member for Townsville Mr Mike Reynolds said Townsville Hospital has shown an improvement in the waiting list for elective surgery compared to the same time in 1998.

"The Elective Surgery Waiting List Report for 1 April 1999 shows that Townsville hospital had reduced the proportion of semi-urgent Category 2 patients waiting longer than 90 days for surgery from 18.2 per cent or 109 patients at 1 April 1998 to 5.1 per cent or 25 patients at 1 April 1999," Mr Reynolds said.

"This represents a further decrease since the last Elective Surgery Waiting List Report for 1 January 1999 which was 42 patients or 9.0 per cent," Mr Reynolds said.

"This was a very good result considering the increased demand for health services experienced by the hospital this year.

"Townsville has consistently performed better than the State average for the last year and I congratulate the staff at this hospital for the dedication they have shown in support of the elective surgery program."

Mr Reynolds said elective surgery throughput statistics also demonstrate the commitment at Townsville hospital to reducing waiting lists and maintaining shorter waiting times. For the first 9 months of this financial year, the hospital treated an additional 312 elective surgery patients compared to the same 9 months in 1997/98.

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Health**The Hon. Wendy Edmond MP****26 April 1999****Toowoomba hospital moves to cut waiting lists**

Ms Edmond said Toowoomba Hospital has shown a significant improvement in the waiting list for elective surgery compared to the same time in 1998.

"Once again the Toowoomba Hospital has performed exceptionally well in Category 1 and is well within the target of less than five percent waiting too long, at 2.7%," Ms Edmond said.

"The Elective Surgery Waiting List Report for 1 April 1999 shows that Toowoomba hospital had reduced the proportion of semi-urgent Category 2 patients waiting longer than 90 days for surgery from 38.0 per cent or 286 patients at 1 April 1998 to 19.6 per cent or 81 patients at 1 April 1999," Ms Edmond said.

"This is an additional reduction over that reported in the last Elective Surgery Waiting List Report for 1 January 1999 which was 25.9 per cent or 140 patients."

"Toowoomba Hospital has gone through a number of major changes this year including the commissioning of a new theatre complex," Ms Edmond said.

"There are still problems in Urology at Toowoomba Hospital but we are looking at a number of options including the transfer of patients to Brisbane to have their operations."

Elective surgery throughput statistics show an increase in the number of elective surgery patients treated this financial year. For the first 9 months of this financial year the hospital had treated 357 elective surgery patients more than that treated in the same 9 months in 1997/98.

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Health**The Hon. Wendy Edmond MP****26 April 1999****Nambour hospital moves to cut waiting lists**

Ms Edmond said Nambour Hospital has shown an improvement in the waiting list for elective surgery compared to the same time in 1998.

"Once again Nambour Hospital has performed exceptionally well in Category 1 with no patients waiting longer than the recommended time," Ms Edmond said.

"The Elective Surgery Waiting List Report for 1 April 1999 shows that Nambour hospital has reduced the proportion of semi-urgent Category 2 patients waiting longer than 90 days for surgery from 27.2 per cent or 181 patients at 1 April 1998 to 11.5 per cent or 88 patients at 1 April 1999.

"This is a further reduction over that reported in the last Elective Surgery Waiting List Report for 1 January 1999 which was 14.1 per cent or 92 patients.

"Nambour hospital has improved its elective surgery performance despite an increase in acute emergency admissions," Ms Edmond said.

"There are still problems in Orthopaedic Surgery at Nambour Hospital but we have provided an extra \$465,000 that will be used exclusively to treat Category 2 Orthopaedic patients who have waited longer than the recommended maximum of 90 days for joint replacement surgery.

"These are very complex and expensive procedures and by the end of June, an extra 40 "long wait" orthopaedic patients will be able to be treated with this funding."

Elective surgery throughput statistics show an increase in the number of elective surgery patients treated this financial year. For the first 9 months of this financial year, the hospital had treated 216 elective surgery patients more than that treated in the same 9 months in 1997/98.

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Health**The Hon. Wendy Edmond MP****26 April 1999****Bundaberg hospital moves to cut waiting lists**

Record numbers of Queenslanders are receiving elective surgery, according to figures released today by the State Government.

The March quarter public hospitals Elective Surgery Waiting List Report reveals an extra 4616 Queenslanders received elective surgery in the first nine months of this financial year, compared with the same period last year.

"That is a tremendous achievement by the public health system during a time of unprecedented demand and all staff deserve to be congratulated," said Health Minister Wendy Edmond.

Ms Edmond said the March quarter report showed 88,659 people received elective surgery in the first nine months of this year, compared with 84,043 at the end of March 1998 - an increase of 5.5 percent.

There was also encouraging news in regard to the number of people waiting "too long" for surgery. According to national benchmarks, Category 1 (urgent) patients should be seen within 30 days; Category 2 (semi-urgent) patients should be seen within 90 days and Category 3 (non-urgent) patients should ideally be seen within 365 days.

Member for Bundaberg Nita Cunningham said there has been a significant improvement in the waiting list for elective surgery at the Bundaberg compared to the same time in 1998.

"Once again Bundaberg Hospital has performed exceptionally well in Category 1 with no patients waiting longer than the recommended time," Ms Cunningham said.

"The Elective Surgery Waiting List Report for 1 April 1999 shows that Bundaberg hospital had reduced the proportion of semi-urgent Category 2 patients waiting longer than 90 days for surgery from 45.6 per cent or 203 patients at 1 April

1998 to 32.8 per cent or 140 patients at 1 April 1999," Mrs Cunningham said.

"There are still delays in Orthopaedic Surgery at Bundaberg Hospital but the Government has provided an extra \$200,000 that will be used exclusively to treat Category 2 Orthopaedic patients who have waited longer than the recommended maximum of 90 days for joint replacement surgery," Mrs Cunningham said.

Ms Edmond said the Government was clearly reducing the number of Queenslanders waiting too long while at the same time greatly increasing the throughput for elective surgery.

"When you consider that elective surgery is just one part of the business of a hospital and that in the first nine months of this year an estimated additional 16,500 patients were treated at our public hospitals compared with this time last year, you can see that the public health system is performing very well in Queensland," Ms Edmond said.

"While I am pleased with this result I fully recognise that waiting lists by their nature go up and down depending on other demands outside of the health system's control. In winter months, for example, we traditionally see an increase in medical rather than surgical patients being admitted to hospital."

The March Quarter report will be available to General Practitioners and surgeons next week.

"This means doctors know the best places to refer patients for earliest treatment," Ms Edmond said.

"By publishing the waiting lists we are also able to identify areas which need special attention."

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Health**The Hon. Wendy Edmond MP****26 April 1999****Gold Coast hospital moves to cut waiting lists**

"Once again the Gold Coast Hospital has performed exceptionally well in Category 1 and is well within the target of less than five per cent waiting too long, at 3.4 per cent," Ms Edmond said.

Ms Edmond said the Elective Surgery Waiting List Report for 1 April 1999 shows that Gold Coast hospital had maintained the proportion of semi-urgent Category 2 patients waiting longer than 90 days for surgery from 1 April 1998, 35.2 per cent or 418 patients to 1 April 1999, 35.3 per cent or 432 patients.

"Although the proportion of 'long wait' Category 2 patients is high compared to the rest of the State, the Gold Coast Hospital has achieved a significant reduction since the last Elective Surgery Waiting List Report for 1 January 1999 which was 47.3 per cent or 669 patients," Ms Edmond said.

"The bulk of the elective surgery backlog at the Gold Coast Hospital was in the specialty of Orthopaedic surgery."

"My government has allocated significant funding for elective surgery at the Gold Coast and this will be used to treat Category 2 Orthopaedic patients who have waited longer than the recommended maximum of 90 days.

"We have filled the Director of Orthopaedics position and this will help alleviate the backlog in this specialty."

Elective surgery throughput statistics also demonstrate the commitment at Gold Coast hospital to reducing waiting lists. For the first 9 months of this financial year, the hospital had treated an additional 619 elective surgery patients compared to the same 9 months in 1997/98.

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Health**The Hon. Wendy Edmond MP****26 April 1999****Ipswich hospital maintains excellent waiting list record**

Joint Statement By Health Minister Wendy Edmond & Treasurer and Member for Ipswich David Hamill

Treasurer and Member for Ipswich David Hamill said Ipswich Hospital had shown an improvement in the waiting list for elective surgery compared to the same time in 1998.

"Once again Ipswich Hospital has performed exceptionally well in Category 1 with no patients waiting longer than the recommended time," Mr Hamill said.

"The Elective Surgery Waiting List Report for 1 April 1999 shows that Ipswich hospital had reduced the proportion of semi-urgent Category 2 patients waiting longer than 90 days for surgery from 12.5 per cent or 60 patients at 1 April 1998 to 4.6 per cent or 23 patients at 1 April 1999."

"The hospital has been able to maintain this record in the three months since the last Elective Surgery Waiting List Report for 1 January 1999 which was 18 patients or 3.5 per cent," Mr Hamill said.

"This was a very good result considering the increased demand for health services experienced by the hospital this year.

"Ipswich has consistently performed better than the State average and I congratulate the staff at this hospital for the dedication they have shown in support of the elective surgery program."

Mr Hamill said elective surgery throughput statistics also demonstrate the commitment at Ipswich to reducing waiting lists and maintaining shorter waiting times. For the first 9 months of this financial year, the hospital had treated an additional 175 elective surgery patients compared to the same 9 months in 1997/98.

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Health**The Hon. Wendy Edmond MP****26 April 1999****Mackay hospital moves to cut waiting lists**

Joint Statement By Health Minister Wendy Edmond & Member for Mackay Tim Mulherin

Member for Mackay Tim Mulherin said the Elective Surgery Waiting List Report for 1 April 1999 shows a significant decrease in Category 2 patients over the last quarterly report for 1 January 1999.

"The number of patients waiting longer than the recommended 90 days dropped from 64 patients or 21.8 per cent to 27 patients or 13.7 per cent," Mr Mulherin said.

"Over the 12 month period from 1 April 1998 to 1 April 1999 there was negligible change with 26 patients waiting longer than recommended for surgery on 1 April 1998 compared to 27 patients on 1 April 1999.

"Once again Mackay Hospital has performed exceptionally well in Category 1 with no patients waiting longer than the recommended time," Mr Mulherin said.

"This was a good result considering the increased demand for health services experienced by the hospital this year.

Mr Mulherin said elective surgery throughput statistics show an increase in the number of elective surgery patients treated this financial year. For the first 9 months of this financial year, the hospital had treated 89 elective surgery patients more than that treated in the same 9 months in 1997/98 from the three elective surgery categories.

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Health**The Hon. Wendy Edmond MP****28 October 1999****Toowoomba Hospital cuts elective surgery waiting times**

Toowoomba Hospital has shown a significant improvement in the number of Category 2 (semi-urgent) patients waiting too long for elective surgery, compared to the same time last year.

Health Minister Wendy Edmond said the latest figures showed that Toowoomba Hospital had reduced the proportion of Category 2 patients waiting longer than 90 days for surgery from 26.3% (140 patients) at 1 October 1998 to 12.1% (43 patients) at 1 October 1999.

"Toowoomba Hospital has gone through a number of major changes over the past twelve months including the commissioning of a new theatre complex. Despite working through these redevelopment changes, Toowoomba hospital has reduced the number of long wait category 2 patients compared to the same period last year.

"This is a testimony to the hard work and dedication shown by the staff at the Toowoomba Hospital and for this they are to be congratulated.

"At the same time elective surgery throughput statistics show an increase in the number of elective surgery patients treated this financial year.

"For the first 3 months of this financial year the hospital treated 161 elective surgery patients more than that treated in the same 3 months in 1998/99.

"While I am pleased with this result I fully recognise that waiting lists by their nature go up and down depending on other demands outside of the health system's control. In winter months, for example, we traditionally see an increase in medical rather than surgical patients being admitted to hospital.

"The October quarter Elective Surgery Waiting List Report is being distributed to general practitioners and surgeons at the moment. This

means doctors know the best places to refer patients for earliest treatment.

"By publishing the waiting lists we are also able to identify areas which need special attention.

"The Report will also be published on the internet and waiting list information from the report will be displayed publicly in 33 public hospitals throughout Queensland.

"The Report is the sixth issued by Queensland Health since Labor introduced its Waiting List Reduction Strategy in July last year.

Further information: Shari Armistead 3234 1190

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Health**The Hon. Wendy Edmond MP****28 October 1999****Gold Coast Hospital cuts elective surgery waiting times**

Staff at the Gold Coast Hospital have been praised for their efforts in significantly reducing the proportion of Category 2 (semi-urgent) patients waiting too long for surgery over the past twelve months.

Health Minister Wendy Edmond said the Elective Surgery Waiting List Report for 1 October 1999 showed that Gold Coast Hospital had decreased the proportion of Category 2 patients waiting longer than 90 days for surgery from 37.5% (535 patients) at 1 October 1998 to 9.0% (92 patients) at 1 October 1999.

"This represents a further reduction since the last Elective Surgery Waiting List Report for 1 July 1999 (218 patients - 19.4%)," Ms Edmond said.

"The Gold Coast hospitals performance has improved remarkably compared to the same period last year despite increases in the demand for health services experienced over the past 12 months.

"This is a testimony to the hard work and dedication shown by the staff at the Gold Coast Hospital and for this they are to be congratulated.

"While I am pleased with this result I fully recognise that waiting lists by their nature go up and down depending on other demands outside of the health system's control. In winter months, for example, we traditionally see an increase in medical rather than surgical patients being admitted to hospital.

"The October quarter Elective Surgery Waiting List Report is being distributed to general practitioners and surgeons at the moment. This means doctors know the best places to refer patients for earliest treatment.

"By publishing the waiting lists we are also able to identify areas which need special attention.

"The Report will also be published on the internet and waiting list information from the report will be displayed publicly in 33 public hospitals throughout Queensland.

"The Report is the sixth issued by Queensland Health since Labor introduced its Waiting List Reduction Strategy in July last year.

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Media Release

Thursday, 30 July 1998

Health Minister lifts the lid on waiting lists

Queensland Health Minister Wendy Edmond today released the state's elective surgery waiting lists, pledging to use the information to cut waiting times.

Ms Edmond told a launch at Parliament House in Brisbane today that publishing hospital waiting lists would help medical practitioners and patients make informed decisions about where to go for surgery.

"This information has been kept under a veil of secrecy and manipulated for political purposes for the past two-and-a-half years under the Coalition," she said.

"Today I am meeting a major health election pledge to come clean with the people of Queensland.

"Under Labor, this information will be a tool to help cut elective surgery waiting times, not a weapon for waging political battles."

The *Elective Surgery Waiting List Report* contains comprehensive, up-to-date waiting list figures for the 32 hospitals who provide 95 per cent of Queensland's public elective surgery.

The information reflects the state of the waiting list for each hospital at 1 July 1998.

The report details:

- the number of people waiting in each surgical specialty for each hospital.
- the number of people in each urgency category and
- the number of people waiting longer than clinically desirable.

The report will be published quarterly and sent to the state's 10,000 general practitioners and surgeons, as well as being displayed publicly in the 32 hospitals.

Ms Edmond said the lists would allow GPs to refer patients to hospitals where waiting lists were shorter and also allow Queensland Health to compare data and identify trouble spots.

Overall the report shows that around 36,000 people are waiting for surgery as of July 1 --- 70 per cent of them for non-urgent surgery.

Minister lifts the lid on waiting lists/2

Around 10,000 of the patients have been waiting longer than the ideal.

However, Ms Edmond said her major concern was that the the figures did not represent the whole picture.

“I believe there is an untold story out there about patients who have not been given appointments to see outpatient specialists and therefore can’t get on a waiting list,” she said.

“For instance, there are more than 650 non-urgent patients waiting for an appointment at the Gold Coast Hospital and around 350 in the same boat at Townsville Hospital.

“I have asked Queensland Health for standardised and improved procedures on this issue and on the collection of data.

“I fully expect a flurry of appointments and, as a result, the next quarterly elective surgery report may show some politically unattractive jumps in waiting times.

○ I am prepared to wear this in the interests of honesty, openness and a better public health service.”

Ms Edmond said she was also implementing Labor’s waiting list strategy as a matter of urgency.

On top of publication of the elective surgery report, the strategy includes:

- \$6.8 million extra each year for extra surgery for complex procedures;
- transferring patients, where possible, to hospitals with shorter waiting lists;
- working with specialist colleges to expand training places for new specialists;
- maximising the use of operating theatres, including looking at holiday periods and
- increasing day surgery.

ends

Eds: For specific information about your local hospital, contact your local health district.

○ Media inquiries:

Jan Martin
3234 1190

October 16, 1998

LABOR PLAN REVEALS “HIDDEN” WAITING LISTS

Health Minister Wendy Edmond’s investigation into hospital waiting lists has revealed a massive “unofficial” list of would-be patients who haven’t even made the official list.

Ms Edmond said the investigation confirmed her long-held fears but represented a major step towards tackling the issue.

“I am now working with the whole picture, knowing where the real bottlenecks are in Queensland’s public hospital system,” she said.

“We can target the bottlenecks with Labor’s waiting list strategy and get more patients into surgery faster.”

Patients referred to public hospitals by their doctors have to wait to be allocated appointments to see a specialist at an outpatient clinics. The specialist assesses the patient and it is only then that the patient is placed on a hospital elective surgery waiting list.

Ms Edmond said in July that she was concerned about the untold story of the waiting list to get an appointment.

She told the launch of the first quarterly waiting list report that more than 650 non-urgent patients were waiting for an appointment at the Gold Coast Hospital and Townsville Hospital had around 350 patients in the same situation.

Ms Edmond said Queensland Health had made some progress on her instruction to develop standardised and improved procedures for allocating appointments and collecting information.

“The downside is that I now know that the waiting list to get on the waiting list for surgery is almost as long as the waiting list for surgery,” she said.

“The upside is that we can now tackle the problem systematically.”

Ms Edmond said Queensland Health was collecting appointment waiting list data manually because no computer systems currently doing this.

Data collected so far showed that about 36 000 people are waiting to see a specialist - roughly the same as the number of people waiting for surgery.

“Of the 36,000 people waiting, around 8,500 have not yet been given an appointment,” she said.

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“About 20,000 patients are waiting to see a specialist in orthopaedics, ear nose and throat, ophthalmology and general surgery.”

Queensland Health’s investigation team is expected to make recommendations, including computerising the data collection, by the end of the year.

The State Labor Government’s existing elective surgery waiting list strategy involves:

- \$6.8 million in recurrent funds for extra complex surgery
- evening out waiting lists by moving people where appropriate to a hospital where their procedure can be performed more speedily
- using holiday times to keep operating theatres working
- increasing day surgery
- working with specialist colleges to expand training places for new specialists

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