



CAIRNS BASE HOSPITAL

Update: March 2011

District profile

The Cairns and Hinterland Health Service District covers an area of about 142,900km² from Tully and Cardwell in the south to the Daintree in the north and west to Croydon. The population of this area is about 240,000. As the referral hospital for the whole of Far North Queensland, Cairns Base Hospital serves a broader population of about 264,000.

What health care is provided?

Cairns Base Hospital

Cairns Base Hospital provides community and specialist hospital services for Cairns and its immediate surroundings and is the major referral centre for Tropical North Queensland.

Services include all major health specialties (medicine, surgery, women's health, paediatrics and mental health) and more than 30 sub-specialties. The hospital also is a major provider of outreach specialist services to remote and rural areas, including obstetrics and gynaecology, anaesthetics, orthopaedics, general medicine, renal medicine diabetes and thoracic medicine. The hospital has around 330 overnight beds.

In 2002 a seven-year \$130 million redevelopment program was completed at Cairns Base Hospital, substantially upgrading the health facilities and services available for Far Northerners. The hospital is currently undergoing a \$446 million redevelopment due for completion in 2015.

District Facilities

- Gordonvale Memorial Hospital - Palliative Care & Respite Centre
- Yarrabah Health Service
- Mossman Multi-Purpose Health Service

- Innisfail Hospital
- Tully Hospital
- Babinda Hospital
- Atherton Hospital
- Mareeba Hospital
- Herberton Hospital/Aged Care Unit
- Primary Health Care Centres at Cow Bay and health centres at Mt Garnet, Malanda, Millaa Millaa, Dimbulah and Ravenshoe.

Community Health Centres
Community Health Centres are located at Edmonton, Westcourt, Smithfield, Aplin St (Cairns), Yarrabah, Mossman, Innisfail, Cardwell, Tully, Jumbun, Cardwell, and Mission Beach.

Community health services include: before and after hospital care; cardiac rehabilitation; community nursing; counselling services; hearing health screening; health education and promotion; home care services; immunisation services; oral health (dental clinics); Positive Parenting Program; school health; baby clinics.

There is an Integrated Mental Health Program in Sheridan St (Cairns) and a Sexual Health Service. In addition, there are Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Service (ATODS) centres in Cairns, Mossman, Innisfail and Mareeba.

Where do most patients receive treatment?

Most district residents can access treatment within the district. Fewer than 5% need to leave the district for treatment. Some people require treatment in Townsville or Brisbane for highly specialised services, such as tertiary cardiothoracic/cardiology, neurosurgery or medical oncology.

How long do patients stay in hospital?

Modern medical technology, procedures and treatment mean people don't need to stay in hospital as long as they used to. The average length of stay in Cairns district facilities has remained constant since 2000 at 2.5 days. If same-day surgery patients are excluded, the average length of stay is 4.5 days.

The Emergency Department

In 2009, the Cairns Base Hospital Emergency Department treated 44,932 patients, an increase of 4.7% on the previous year. Patients presenting at emergency are given a triage rating based on the national triage scale:

1. Resuscitation – Treat immediately
2. Emergency – Treat within 10 minutes
3. Urgent – Treat within 30 minutes
4. Semi-urgent – Treat within 60 minutes
5. Non-urgent – Treat within 120 minutes.

Cairns Base Hospital's Emergency Department generally meets these national benchmarks for the most urgent category. 100% of Category 1 patients are seen immediately. The national target for Category 2 is 80%; and currently around 79.6% are seen on time.

Elective Surgery

Patients requiring elective surgery are categorised by the consultant at the public health care facility. For category 1 patients (with a condition that has the potential to deteriorate quickly, to the point that it may become an emergency), admission within 30 days is desirable. As at January 1, 2010, 22 category 1 patients at Cairns Base Hospital (23.7% of the total) had waited longer than this. For category 2 patients (with a condition causing some pain, dysfunction or disability, but which is not likely to deteriorate quickly or become an emergency) admission within 90 days is desirable. As at January 1, 2010, 396 patients (43%) on this list had waited longer.

Cairns Base Hospital snapshot

In 2009, there were...

- 44,246 total admissions
- 8,604 surgery procedures
- 44,930 Emergency Department attendances
- 18,823 dialysis treatments
- 4,094 oncology treatments
- 2,605 births

As at February 1, 2010 Cairns Base Hospital employed 2223 full, part-time and casual staff, including 270 doctors and 1130 nurses.

More information on elective surgery waiting lists can be found on the Queensland Health web site: <http://www.health.qld.gov.au>.

Service developments

- Cairns Base Hospital's first Cardiac Catheter Laboratory opened in January 2006. Funding of \$2.2 million allocated for a replacement catheter lab, work started in late 2009.
- The \$1.4 million relocation of the Cancer Care Centre within Cairns Base Hospital completed October 2009.
- Emergency Department: \$11.1 million to expand ED, including 12 extra beds (8 general, 3 cardiac and one resuscitation). The expansion, scheduled for completion by late 2010, will expand beds from 36 to 50.
- \$1.43 million allocated for expansion of renal medicine services. Completed end of 2007.
- New, \$1.52 million CT scanner installed at Cairns Base Hospital July 2006. An MRI licence was approved in February 2008 and the \$8.5 million installation was completed in August 2009.

Capital developments

- Cairns Base Hospital to be redeveloped over five years at an estimated cost of \$446.3 million. Project expected to be completed by 2014. Will expand number of beds by 168, bringing total to 531.
- Cairns North Community Health Facility - \$12.7 million allocated for first two stages of project on Cairns North State School site. Stage one completed and Stage two expected to be completed by mid-2010.
- Innisfail Hospital redeveloped at a cost of \$42.304 million and completed August 2008.
- Yarrabah Primary Health Care Centre – construction currently under way at a cost of \$16.3 million and due to be completed in early 2010.

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