

Guy Barnett MP

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Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

Guy Barnett, Minister for Health

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Transforming outpatient so Tasmanians receive health care sooner

The Rockliff Liberal Government is delivering an extra 10,000 outpatient appointments on average each month thanks to its long-term investment in the health system and the dedication of healthcare workers.

Since 2014, outpatient appointments have increased from 40,000 to 50,000 every month.

Minister for Health, Guy Barnett, said this is a significant increase in appointments each month and shows we are delivering healthcare to Tasmanians faster.

“Tasmanians are benefiting from the Rockliff Liberal Government’s long-term plan to improve outpatient services statewide, ensuring they receive the healthcare they need sooner,” Minister Barnett said.

“Our Government launched its four-year Transforming Outpatient Services Strategy last year to help shorten wait times, improve communication, and modernise and streamline service delivery.

“We have committed more than \$26 million to deliver the Transforming Outpatient Services Strategy.

“As part of this, a new Outpatient Central Services team was established to improve communication between patients and outpatient clinics statewide,.

“This initiative has been highly successful and is helping to improve patient experience and health outcomes.”

Established in November 2022, the Outpatient Central Services team works closely with patients to confirm appointments and register any cancellations, as well as ensuring cancelled appointments can be filled by another patient on the waiting list.

Minister Barnett said the Outpatient Central Services team makes and receives an average of about 1000 calls and register about 200 referrals each day, which increases capacity to deliver health services to Tasmanians.

“Our health system schedules more than 50,000 outpatient appointments per month on average, and historically, up to 10 per cent of appointments have gone unattended,” Minister Barnett said.

“Pleasingly, this has improved over the past year, with unattended appointments reducing to 7.8 per cent.

“I would like to thank the Outpatient Central Services team for the wonderful job it is doing to make our healthcare system more efficient.

“This also supports our frontline health workers to focus on delivering care to patients, rather than spending unnecessary time on administrative tasks.”

The important work of the Outpatient Central Services team aligns with our highly successful eReferrals program, which has been implemented statewide as part of our Digital Health Transformation program.

General practitioners can now send an eReferral instantly for an outpatient appointment, where it is triaged and processed without the need to print, scan or fax referral forms.

The Outpatient Central Services team registers referrals and ensures they are promptly followed up. More than 26,000 eReferrals have been received since the system was implemented earlier this year, with very strong take-up among Tasmanian general practices.

The Rockliff Liberal Government is delivering on our long-term plan to transform outpatient services in Tasmania.