



ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

MEDIA RELEASE

Better organisation can improve surgical services

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A major reorganisation of surgical services is needed to improve the delivery of these services, an article in the latest issue of the *ANZ Journal of Surgery* asserts. This should include the development of high volume short-stay surgical services (HVSS), the establishment of specialty centres and the streaming of emergency and planned surgery.

The project's findings are in line with recent calls from the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons for the separation of elective and emergency surgical streams in Australian and New Zealand public hospitals. A report advocating this reform is available at the College's [website](http://www.surgeons.org/media/307115/sbm_2011-05-24_separating_elective_and_emergency_surgery.pdf) (http://www.surgeons.org/media/307115/sbm_2011-05-24_separating_elective_and_emergency_surgery.pdf).

The article highlights recommendations arising from the Surgery Futures project, initiated in 2010 by the New South Wales Surgical Services Taskforce and the NSW Department of Health. It was driven by the need for a clear vision for the delivery of surgical services in that state for the next five to ten years. The project involved consultation with more than 400 clinicians.

The recommendations centre on the HVSS model, which is surgery defined as requiring a stay of up to 72 hours, such as knee joint arthroscopy, cataract removal and lens replacement and tonsillectomy.

The HVSS model is considered one of the most important building blocks for shaping the future of planned surgery in New South Wales, according to the article's lead author, Professor Donald MacLellan of the Health Services Performance Improvement Branch at NSW Health.

"It will enable the maximisation of investment in new equipment and technology, as well as provide an enhanced training environment for surgical trainees, operating room and surgical ward nurses and anaesthetic trainees," Professor MacLellan said.

"Many hospitals still attempt to deliver all levels of surgery, from the routine to the highly specialized, while coping with the demands of unplanned surgery and trauma. The wide dispersion of surgical services results in dilution of investment in advanced technology and practice."

"It is imperative that these recommendations form part of the long-term planning of surgical services."

The *ANZ Journal of Surgery*, now in its 80th year and published by Wiley-Blackwell, is the pre-eminent surgical journal published in Australia, New Zealand and the South-East Asian region. The Journal is dedicated to the promotion of outstanding surgical practice, and research of contemporary and international interest.

Media inquiries: **Bridget Hooper, Media & Public Relations Officer**
0437 008 891 or (03) 9276 7430

Visit: www.anzsurg.com

