

The Challenges and Successes of Setting up a Designated Paediatric Emergency Department

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Background

Demand for acute paediatric care has increased steadily over the past few years at Ipswich Hospital (IH). The changing focus of care centres on the opening of a single major specialist children's hospital for Queensland (The Lady Cilento Children's Hospital - LCCH) in late 2014, and the required development of Level 4 Children's Emergency Services (Clinical Services Capability Framework) within IH.

A 15 bed designated Paediatric ED (PED) built within the footprint of the Emergency Department, completed in November 2013. Planning of the space took place with key stakeholders 3 years prior to completion. In February 2013 a Paediatric Nurse Consultant was employed to facilitate the transition in to the space including training, education, and most importantly embedding a new model of care within an already established department.

Challenges

Due to limited resources a three staged opening proposal was developed to allow initial opening in a cost neutral way. This required re-thinking and re-designing current working methods, and the buy in of the staff on the floor to ensure the model was able to work. The result to date has been limited opening hours, with the unit currently open 8 hours per day during peak presentation times.

Successes

The PED has been able to provide care grounded in national standards in a child and family focused caring environment, with all specialist equipment readily available within the purpose built facility. The National Emergency Access Target for children seen through the Paediatric Unit sits at >90%, there have been no clinical incidents or adverse outcomes, and the parental, child and family feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Future Direction

The PED has been a positive move forward in the delivery of care to children. The service will continue to move forward until it reaches its full potential of a full time service.