

B. Audit scope and methods

Performance engagement

This audit has been performed in accordance with the *Auditor-General Auditing Standards* and the Standard on Assurance Engagements ASAE 3500 *Performance Engagements*, issued by the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board. This standard establishes mandatory requirements and provides explanatory guidance for undertaking and reporting on performance engagements.

The conclusions in our report provide reasonable assurance that the objectives of our audit have been achieved. Our objectives and criteria are set out below.

Audit objective

The audit objective was to examine whether Queensland Health has improved patient access to specialist outpatient services.

The audit addressed the objective through the following sub-objectives and audit criteria.

Sub-objective 1:	
Have the 11 investment initiatives outlined in the Specialist Outpatient Strategy been implemented and achieved the intended objectives?	
Criteria	Detailed criteria
1.1 Queensland Health effectively managed, monitored, and reported on the implementation of the strategy and initiatives (patient journey improvements).	1.1.1 Queensland Health had an approved plan for implementing the strategy, which set out the goals, budget, schedule, actions, responsibilities, and desired outcomes for each initiative.
	1.1.2 Queensland Health operated a governance structure and supporting processes that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided appropriate oversight and scrutiny of the implementation of the strategy • ensured it received reliable information to monitor and manage risks and delivery of the initiatives.
	1.1.3 Queensland Health measured and reported on implementation progress including program risks, costs, time frames, resources, and quality.
1.2 The initiatives have improved patient access to specialist outpatient services.	1.2.1 Specialist outpatient services have increased in areas and services of greatest demand.
	1.2.2 Contemporary information management systems have increased system integration and efficiency.
	1.2.3 Alternative care pathways are being used consistently and effectively to improve equity of access.
	1.2.4 The percentage of specialist outpatients waiting within clinically recommended times has improved over the life of the <i>Specialist Outpatient Strategy</i> and is in line with targets.



Sub-objective 2:
Has Queensland Health monitored and evaluated the effectiveness of initiatives to inform future service design and investment?

Criteria	Detailed criteria
2.1 Queensland Health identified and documented risks, opportunities, costs, and learnings from implementing the initiatives.	2.1.1 Queensland Health collected relevant information and sought feedback from relevant partners and stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of initiatives.
	2.1.2 Queensland Health conducted and managed evaluations consistently across the program.
2.2 Queensland Health analysed and used the information to inform future service design and planning.	2.2.1 Queensland Health analysed the information in the evaluation reports and documented key findings.
	2.2.2 Results of evaluations and analysis were used for knowledge sharing across similar programs and to inform future program design.

Entities subject to this audit

- Department of Health
- hospital and health services (HHSs).

We examined specialist outpatient activity and performance data for all HHSs.

We sent questionnaires to all HHSs and visited the following for detailed discussion:

- Children’s Health Queensland HHS
- Sunshine Coast HHS
- Central Queensland HHS
- Metro South HHS.

Time period covered by the audit

We examined specialist outpatient activity data and Queensland Health activities in response to the *Specialist Outpatient Strategy* over a six-year period from 2015–16 to 2020–21 (1 July 2015 to 30 June 2020).

Summary of work performed

The audit included:

- interviews with staff from the Department of Health and selected HHSs
- review of relevant documents
- analysis of specialist outpatient activity data
- observation of developed systems.

Scope exclusions

We did not assess:

- demand management strategies, but focused on the supply side of specialist outpatient services
- health service planning
- development and program definition of the *Specialist Outpatient Strategy*
- hospital emergency departments and elective surgery.

