

Report on a page

This report summarises the audit results of Queensland Health entities, which include the Department of Health (the department) and 16 hospital and health services (HHSs). It also summarises the audit results for 13 hospital foundations, 5 other statutory bodies, and 3 entities controlled by other health entities.

Entities face challenges in managing the cost of services

Queensland's population has continued to grow, placing additional pressures on the public health system. The number of elderly Queenslanders has also increased, which has a direct impact on demand for health services.

The Queensland public health system has responded by providing an 11.7 per cent increase in services this year. The increased activity has come at a financial cost, with the department and HHSs reporting a combined financial deficit of \$960.6 million for the year, higher than ever previously reported.

The financial deficit reflects additional expenditure on employee costs, supplies and services, and asset maintenance and construction. The number of staff employed by the department and HHSs increased by 5.6 per cent this year. This, along with operating expenses, is expected to continue increasing in coming years as the department responds to the additional demands of a growing and ageing population.

Queensland Health is responsible for maintaining hospitals and related assets valued at \$19 billion. It is also responsible for planning for future needs, constructing new hospitals, and expanding existing ones. HHSs report that the cost of the maintenance they have deferred on their assets grew by a further 28.9 per cent to \$2.6 billion as at 30 June 2025. The maintenance that is being deferred is impacting on the delivery of some health services. This includes delaying patient treatment or requiring patients to be diverted to other locations for treatment. The government has committed additional funding to address historic shortfalls in funding.

Financial statements are reliable, but controls over information systems still need to be strengthened

Health sector entities' financial statements are reliable and their internal controls are also generally effective. However, we continue to find deficiencies in information technology (IT) access and security controls. Health entities are considered attractive targets by cyber criminals, due to the personal information they hold and the potential for profit. We therefore consider these access control deficiencies as significant. While management is working to address these complex issues, they need to take more timely action to resolve the deficiencies.

Addressing demand for health services

Emergency departments continue to not meet the 4-hour target to treat and discharge patients, as is the case with other states and territories. The performance of emergency departments also impacts on ambulance services, where time is lost due to delays in transferring patients from ambulances into hospital care. Queensland Ambulance Service response times are better than in other jurisdictions but still below Queensland's target.

Queensland Health referred more specialist outpatients for treatment during the year than last year, but it continues to fall behind on its time targets, and the number of outpatients classified as 'long waits' has grown by 15 per cent this year.

