

THE AUDIT OFFICE
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

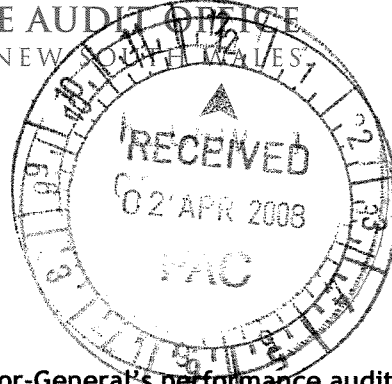
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Mr Paul McLeay MP
Chair
Public Accounts Committee
Parliament House, Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000



31 March 2008

Dear Mr McLeay

**Examination of Auditor-General's performance audit report
Helping Older People Access a Residential Aged Care Facility**

We have reviewed NSW Health's submission on its response to our performance audit report.

When the report was tabled the then Director-General accepted our recommendations. Her response (included in the report) provided details on the actions planned to address each of the eight recommendations.

NSW Health's latest submission reports progress in addressing the recommendations. In the attached table, we comment on the relevance and progress of NSW Health's action in addressing the recommendations.

The submission indicates that NSW Health has made material progress in addressing the recommendations. However it does not contain sufficient detail for us to substantiate the reported progress.

You may wish to consider asking the Director-General to provide data to update the data used in the original report in December 2006 to demonstrate progress. For example, the issue underlying the first recommendation was:

[NSW] Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACATs) commence the assessment of clients in hospital within the Commonwealth's target times, but not of clients living in the community. Clients in hospital are seen faster than clients of the same priority in the community. Overall, based on 2003-04 data, NSW ACATs take slightly longer than the national average to commence assessments, and the performance of individual ACATs varies widely.¹

NSW Health's response does not provide information to show whether assessment performance had now improved to address these findings.

I will forward a copy of this correspondence to the Director-General of NSW Health.

I am very happy to provide any further assistance the Committee may need in completing its examination.

Yours sincerely

Peter Achterstraat
Auditor-General

Attach

¹ The Audit Office of NSW, *Helping Older People Access a Residential Aged Care Facility*, December 2006, p18

Attachment:**Audit Office observation of NSW Health proposed action and progress*****Helping Older People Access a Residential Aged Care Facility***

Recommendation	Does proposed action address issue?	Progress reported by Health
1. Ensure that all clients are assessed and treated in accordance with Commonwealth guidelines whether they are in hospital or living at home	Yes: proposed action consistent with intent of recommendation	Most actions implemented: scheduled for completion mid 2008
2. Survey clients, carers, referrers and service providers to gauge satisfaction with services and identify improvement opportunities	Yes: proposed action consistent with intent of recommendation	Implementation commenced: initial results due Jun 2008
3. Clarify the duties that ACATs should perform and ensure they have sufficient resources to meet this workload	Yes: proposed action consistent with intent of recommendation	Implementation commenced: scheduled for completion Jun 2008
4. Improve the consistency and accuracy of data for performance management	Yes: proposed action consistent with intent of recommendation	Implementation commenced: scheduled for completion Jun 2008
5. Ensure that consistent assessment approaches are adopted by all ACATs so that assessments completed by different ACATs produce consistent recommendations	Yes: proposed action consistent with intent of recommendation	Implementation commenced: initial results due Jun 2008
6. Publish ACAT performance (including the number of assessments and waiting times) in its annual report	Yes: proposed action consistent with intent of recommendation	Implementation commenced: to be included in 2007-08 annual report and thereafter
7. Evaluate approaches used by different types of hospitals for managing inpatients awaiting residential aged care to identify better practices and encourage their wider adoption	Not clear whether actions taken will address issue identified by audit	Implementation commenced: to be evaluated Dec 2008
8. Review existing data collections to provide more timely information on the number of older people waiting in hospital for entry into residential aged care.	Yes: proposed action consistent with intent of recommendation	Implementation commenced: initial results due Aug 2008