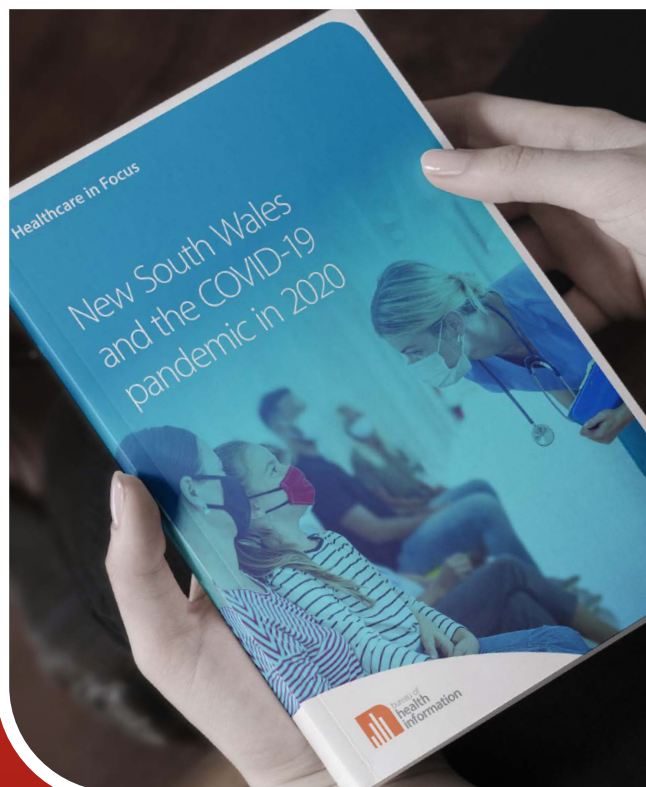
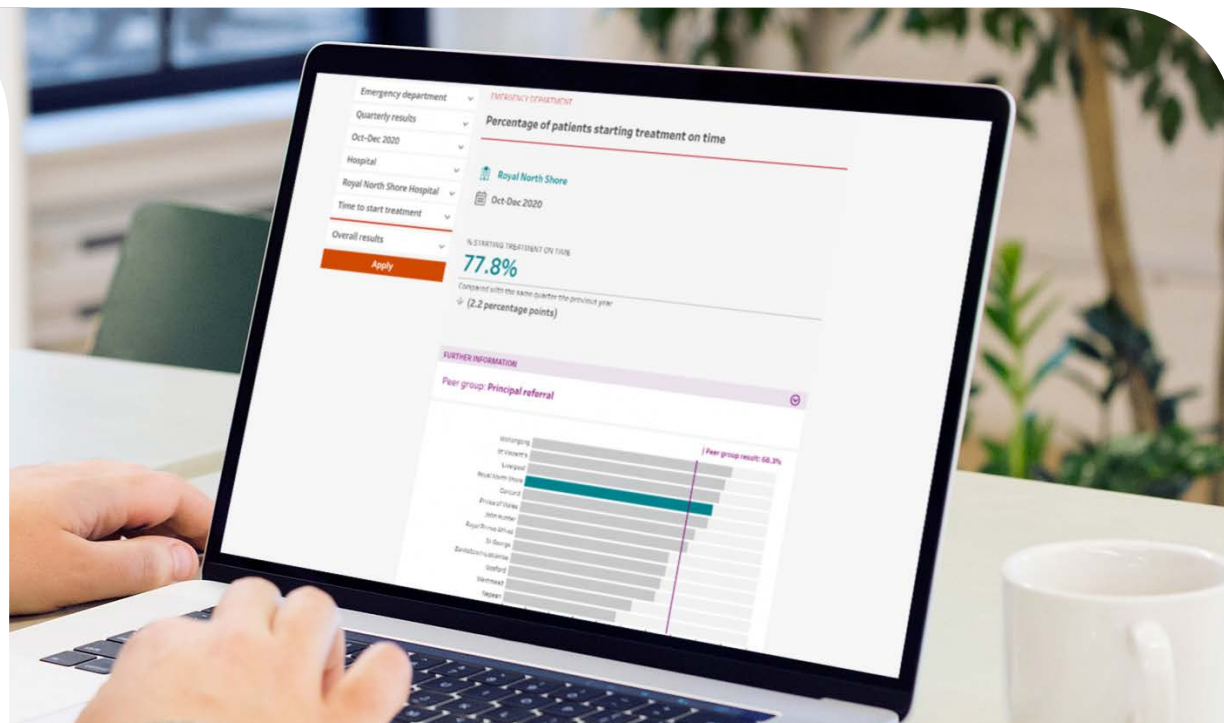


Year in Review 2020–21





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The Bureau of Health Information is a board-governed organisation that produces independent reports on the performance of the healthcare system in NSW.

Using advanced data analytics and visualisation, we deliver reports and information products that describe key aspects of healthcare performance for a range of consumer, healthcare and policy audiences.

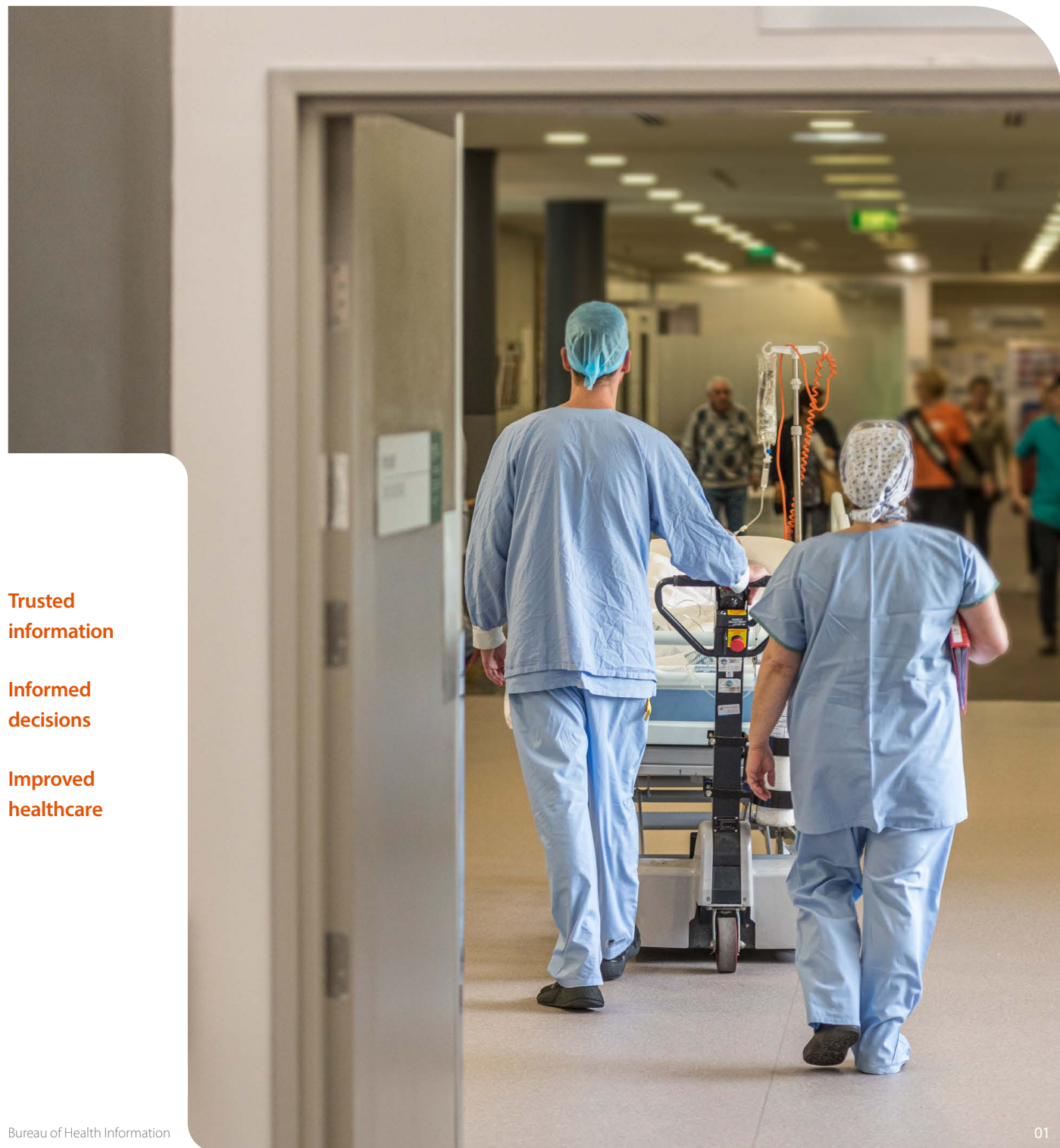
We provide this information to strengthen accountability and support system-wide and local improvements in patients' healthcare experiences and outcomes. Public reporting of this information enhances transparency and understanding of healthcare performance for consumers and local communities.

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) is led by the Board, which is chaired by Professor Carol Pollock AO, and Chief Executive Dr Diane Watson.

**Trusted
information**

**Informed
decisions**

**Improved
healthcare**



From the Chair



Professor Carol Pollock AO
Board Chair

BHI responded to the challenges of 2020–21 by tailoring its reporting of healthcare performance information to provide additional insights into the impact of COVID-19.

The pandemic has been a monumental test for our healthcare system, which through the dedication and expertise of so many people has shown great agility in working to protect the safety of the people of NSW.

For BHI, our charter is to deliver timely, accurate and high-quality information that strengthens accountability and supports improvements to health services. There is no time this role could be more important than in the midst of a global pandemic.

BHI worked to provide health professionals and system managers with insights into the pandemic's impacts, both through routine and specially tailored reporting of data.

This was especially evident in our March *Healthcare in Focus* report and *Healthcare Quarterly* report series. These reports included new and innovative ways of examining patterns of health system activity and performance during the pandemic.

These insights were not only valuable at the time of publication but will also – coupled with ongoing reporting – provide a clear picture of the health system during a major crisis that can be used to plan for future events.

Importantly, we have also continued to listen during the pandemic – to thousands of patients about their experiences of care through the NSW Patient Survey Program, and to our stakeholders about how we can improve BHI's reporting to best support improvements to health services.

This commitment to engagement is already beginning to bear fruit through our new digital-first approach to reporting and survey program reforms. There are many more improvements on the way.

I would like to thank Chief Executive, Dr Diane Watson, and her executive team for their leadership of BHI's highly skilled staff during such challenging times.

I also acknowledge my fellow Board members. Their valuable advice and input have underpinned BHI's successes.

From the Chief Executive



Dr Diane Watson
Chief Executive

BHI continued to work on improvements and new initiatives to ensure our healthcare performance reporting provides value during the pandemic and beyond.

During 2020–21, BHI publicly released 13 reports and associated information products.

This included a *Healthcare in Focus* report dedicated to examining patterns of health system activity and performance, patient experience, COVID-19 testing and quarantine services throughout 2020. Our *Healthcare Quarterly* report series also provided valuable insights into the pandemic's impact across a wide range of key measures.

We published results from six surveys – including insights into what Aboriginal patients had to say about their experiences of admitted and maternity care – and a *Healthcare in Focus* report examining five-year trends in patient experience.

At the end of 2020, BHI developed the first statewide survey to collect information about patients' experiences and outcomes of virtual care outpatient appointments with NSW public hospitals.

Additionally, and with constant consideration of stakeholder feedback provided as part of our

extensive engagement program, we delivered major improvements that will enhance our healthcare performance reporting long term.

This included the introduction of shorter, more flexible surveys which make it easier for patients to provide feedback on their experiences of healthcare, while also focusing on priority aspects of care that best guide improvements in the delivery of services.

In a major step forward for healthcare performance reporting in NSW, we also launched the new BHI Data Portal, making results far more accessible and user friendly. *Healthcare Quarterly* results were the first to appear, with patient surveys to follow as part of a staged implementation.

Thank you so much to the entire BHI team for your dedication and commitment to excellence during this time, including those seconded to the NSW Ministry of Health to support the COVID-19 response.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank our Board for their support and contribution during the year.

NSW Patient Survey Program

We heard from almost 60,000 people about their experiences of care in the NSW health system in 2020–21.

This feedback is a rich source of information on patient experience. BHI publicly reports survey results to strengthen accountability and support system-wide and local improvement in patients' healthcare experiences and outcomes.

In 2020–21, BHI published results from six surveys. These results were presented in information products ranging from Snapshot reports to full, detailed results on the **BHI website**. Additionally, BHI's *Healthcare in Focus* report, *People's experiences of hospital care: Insights from five years of patient feedback*, looked in detail at how patients' experiences have changed over time.

Throughout the year, we asked people about their experiences of care via questionnaires covering a range of care settings. These included adults admitted to hospital, people who visited emergency departments and those attending outpatient cancer clinics.

BHI delivered a range of survey program enhancements and tailored reporting to enhance the value of patient experience feedback in driving improvements to care.

Key developments for patient surveys included introducing shorter, more focused questionnaires to reduce the burden on patients while also focusing on priority aspects of care that best guide improvements in the delivery of services.

At the end of 2020, BHI developed the first statewide survey to collect information about patients' experiences and outcomes of virtual care outpatient appointments with NSW public hospitals. This formed the first part of a program of work that will help improve healthcare experiences and outcomes for patients across NSW.

We continued to apply advanced methods for standardising comparisons of hospital results to ensure they take into account key differences in patient populations.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, BHI has continued to ask patients about their experiences of care, recognising the importance of collecting this feedback at such a challenging time.

Survey results published in 2020–21



Emergency Department Patient Surveys 2018–19 and 2019–20



Outpatient Cancer Clinics Survey 2019



Adult Admitted Patient Survey 2019



Maternity Care Survey 2019



Rural Hospital Adult Admitted Patient Survey 2019–20



Rural Hospital Emergency Care Survey 2019

Aboriginal patient experience

In 2020–21, BHI published survey results showing what Aboriginal people had to say about their experiences as admitted patients or receiving maternity care in NSW public hospitals.

This was enabled by a census sample that invited every adult who identified as Aboriginal, and was either admitted to or gave birth in a NSW public hospital in 2019, to provide feedback on their experiences of care.

More than 3,500 Aboriginal people responded to the Adult Admitted Patient Survey 2019 and almost 300 Aboriginal women responded to the Maternity Care Survey 2019. Key NSW-level findings for these Aboriginal people were included in the Snapshot reports for each survey.

This was one of the major initiatives of the Aboriginal Patient Experience Survey Program, a partnership between BHI and the Centre for Aboriginal Health.

Hearing from Aboriginal people about their experiences of care is fundamental to efforts to tailor care to their needs and help improve health outcomes.



Snapshots

Snapshot reports highlighting key patient experience findings at NSW level were published for six surveys in 2020–21. More detailed results at hospital, local health district and NSW levels are available on the BHI website.



Emergency Department Patient Surveys 2018–19 and 2019–20

Around 18,000 people each year told us about their experiences of care in NSW emergency departments in 2018–19 and 2019–20

Overall, 88% of patients in 2019–20 rated their care as



Adult Admitted Patient Survey 2019

Almost 22,000 people told us about their experiences of care in NSW public hospitals in 2019

Overall, 93% of patients rated their care as



Outpatient Cancer Clinics Survey 2019

More than 13,000 people told us about their experiences of care at NSW outpatient cancer clinics in 2019

Overall, 99% of patients rated their care as



Snapshots



Rural Hospital Emergency Care Patient Survey 2019

More than 6,000 people told us about their experiences of emergency care in small, rural public hospitals in NSW in 2019

Overall, 94% of patients rated their care as



Rural Hospital Adult Admitted Patient Survey 2019–20

Almost 4,500 people told us about their experiences of care in small, rural public hospitals in NSW in 2019–20

Overall, 95% of patients rated their care as



Maternity Care Survey 2019

Almost 4,500 women who gave birth in NSW public hospitals in 2019 told us about their experiences of care

Overall, 94% of women rated their care during labour and birth as



Healthcare in Focus

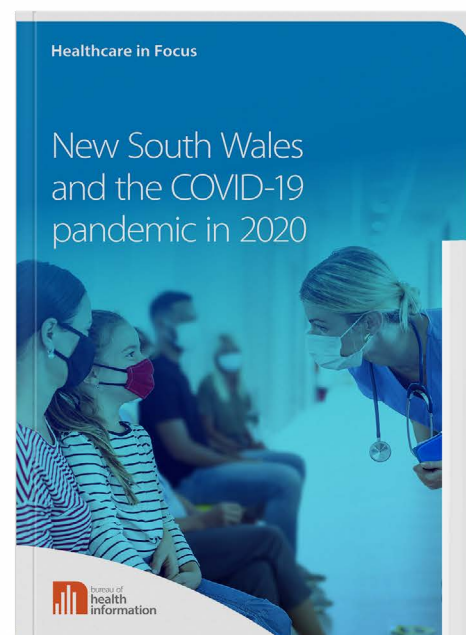
In 2020–21, BHI provided two *Healthcare in Focus* reports to the NSW Minister for Health and Medical Research and NSW Parliament, on the performance of the NSW public health system.

New South Wales and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020

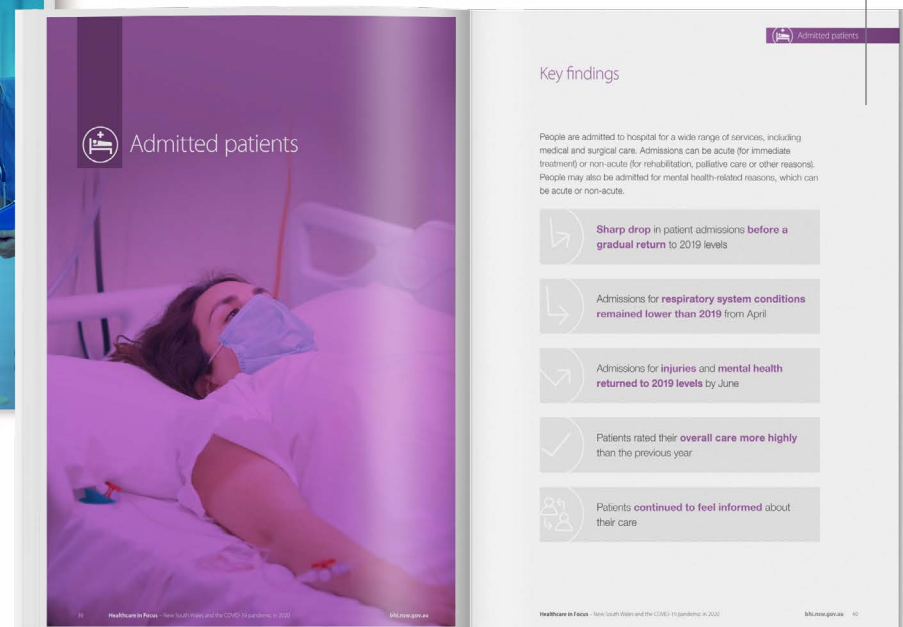
Published in March 2021, this report provides insights into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the public healthcare system in NSW during 2020. It examines patterns of activity and performance throughout the year, focusing on emergency departments (EDs), elective surgery, admitted patients and ambulance services.

Key findings include:

- EDs were quieter and people had shorter waits in 2020 than in 2019.
- Elective surgery activity exceeded 2019 levels in the second half of the year following a major decrease due to the suspension of non-urgent surgery.
- Patient admissions and ambulance responses decreased notably during the March–April outbreak.
- Overall, patients rated their ED and admitted patient care more highly in 2020 than 2019.



New South Wales and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020



Healthcare in Focus

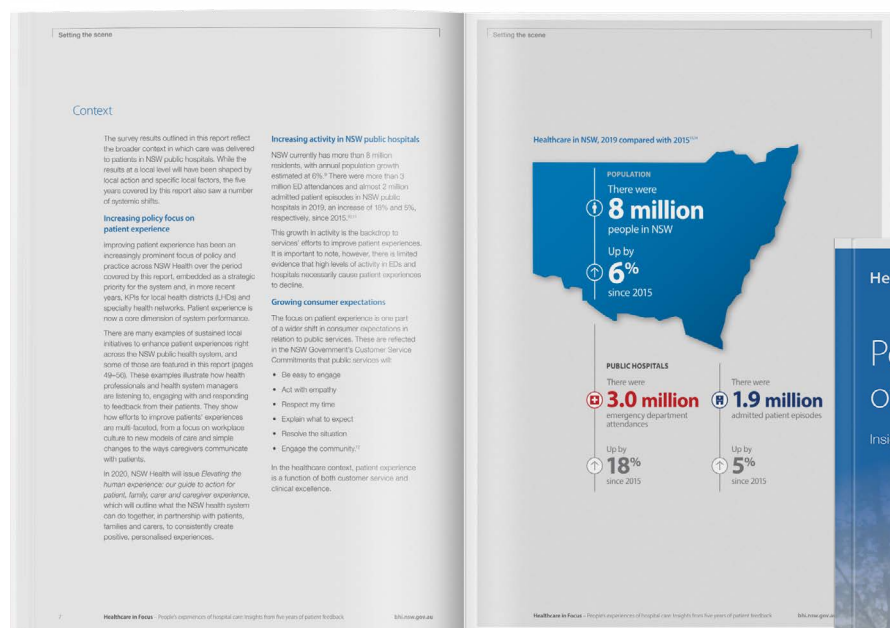
People's experiences of hospital care: Insights from five years of patient feedback

Released in July 2020, this report examines the experiences of more than 200,000 people in NSW public hospitals. Drawing on special analyses of the results of BHI's Emergency Department and Adult Admitted Patient Surveys, it provides valuable insights into how patients' experiences changed over a five-year period.

Key findings include:

- Health professionals were very highly rated for their kindness by ED and admitted patients.
- ED patients felt increasingly involved in decisions about their care and treatment.
- There were significant declines in ED patients' ratings of pain management and timeliness of care.
- Admitted patients' ratings of care improved significantly for more than half of the questions analysed, including overall ratings of care and interactions with health professionals.

People's experiences of hospital care: Insights from five years of patient feedback



Healthcare Quarterly

Healthcare Quarterly tracks activity and performance for emergency department, elective surgery, admitted patient and ambulance services in NSW. It also includes reporting on seclusion and restraint in public hospitals with specialised acute mental health units.

In 2020–21, *Healthcare Quarterly* included a number of special reporting features to provide tailored and additional insights into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the NSW healthcare system.

The *COVID-19 Supplement* outlined weekly patterns of activity during the pandemic, while reporting on hotel quarantine and Special Health Accommodation provided important information regarding efforts to control the spread of COVID-19 in NSW.

Healthcare Quarterly results are presented in a main report with more detailed information, including at hospital and local health district level, available on the BHI Data Portal and in activity and performance profiles.

This report series continued to provide regular insights related to the activity and performance of the NSW healthcare system, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Bureau of Health Information Data Portal

The new BHI Data Portal was launched in June 2021, with *Healthcare Quarterly* results the first to appear as part of a staged implementation.

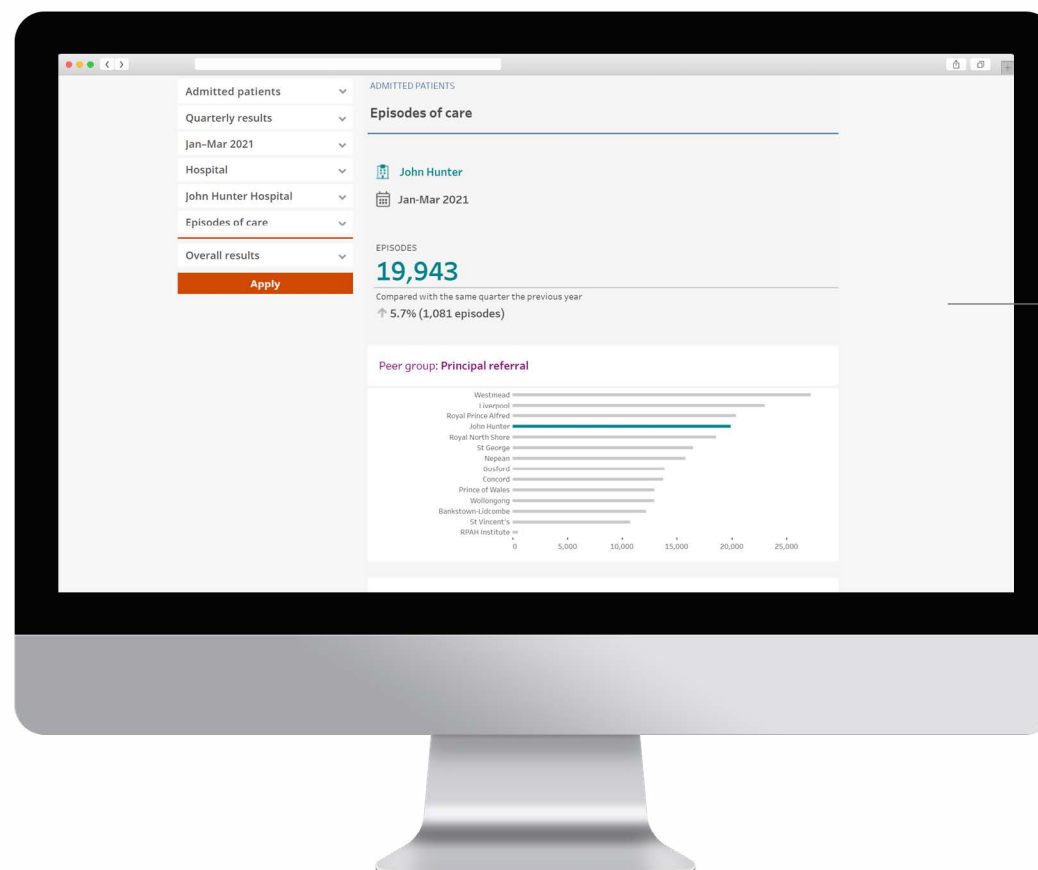
With advanced dashboards and intuitive navigation, the portal makes it easier for healthcare professionals, system managers, policy-makers and the public to find and compare results for health services in NSW.

Users are able to explore recent results in comparison with past performance and other health services, including trends over time.

In 2021–22, results from the NSW Patient Survey Program will be added to the portal as part of BHI's digital strategy, which will also include the launch of a new BHI website in 2022.

BHI is introducing a digital-first approach to reporting healthcare performance results in NSW, making them more accessible and user friendly.

BHI Data Portal, launched June 2021



Engagement and collaboration

We worked with many colleagues from different parts of the healthcare system, who supported and helped to enhance our work in 2020–21.

Engagement on reports

Working with the NSW Ministry of Health and local health districts (LHDs), we continued to enhance the usefulness of our reports. For example, we engaged directors of clinical governance on the internal release of patient mortality results for individual hospitals from July 2018 to June 2020. We also worked with directors and managers of Aboriginal health ahead of the release of *The Insights Series: Aboriginal people's experiences of hospital care*, to help ensure the results could be used to support improvement efforts.

Patient experience collaboration

BHI supported the Ministry with survey data for the NSW Health Leading Better Value Care program.

We supported the Cancer Institute NSW in using patient survey information and engaged with managers of cancer services across the health system.

BHI continued to work closely with stakeholders to develop new approaches to our reporting, ensuring its value in helping to inform healthcare improvement efforts.

Working closely with the Ministry's Strategic Reform and Planning Branch, BHI developed a survey to collect information about patients' experiences and outcomes of virtual care to support the monitoring and evaluation of the NSW Health Virtual Care Strategy. We also recommended a core set of virtual care experience questions for use in real-time feedback.

We worked with the Ministry's Health and Social Policy Branch and other key stakeholders to review the Maternity Care Survey questionnaire and to develop and test approaches to collecting information about experiences of palliative care and healthcare at the end of life.

Pandemic support

BHI continued to actively support NSW Health with the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost one quarter of our staff were seconded to the Ministry to support the COVID-19 response, particularly in the areas of communications, operations management and data analytics.

Advisory committees

To ensure our work was aligned and responsive to key audiences, BHI led a number of advisory committees, including the:

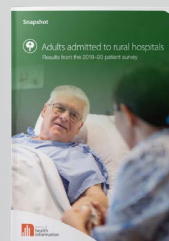
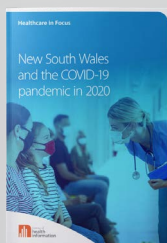
- Aboriginal Patient Experience Survey Program Advisory Committee (co-chaired with the Centre for Aboriginal Health)
- Maternity Care Survey Advisory Group
- NSW Patient Survey Program Strategy Committee
- BHI Scientific Advisory Committee.

Our expert staff represented the organisation on key system-wide committees focused on improvement and reform in the areas of patient experience and data access, governance and use. They also published research and presented at Australian and international conferences, forums, workshops and meetings.

Who did we reach?

Reports

13
public
reports



Mentions in the media

3,113
Total

534
Online

342
Print

1,760
Broadcast

477
Social



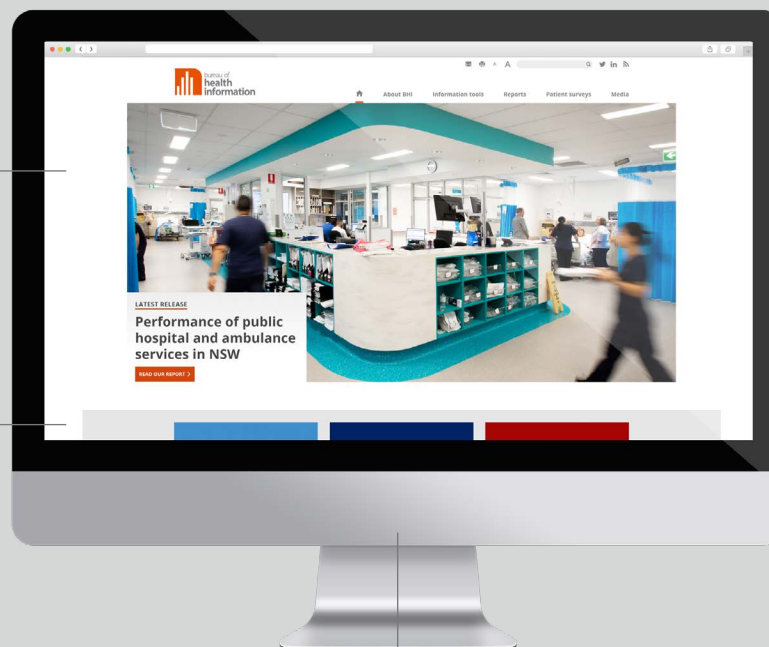
Who did we reach?

Website

80,571
visits

188,572
page views

191
visitors per day



Social media and e-newsletter

1,682
Twitter followers

1,255
e-newsletter subscribers

About the Bureau of Health Information

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) is a board-governed organisation that provides independent information about the performance of the NSW healthcare system.

BHI was established in 2009 and supports the accountability of the healthcare system by providing regular and detailed information to the community, government and healthcare professionals. This in turn supports quality improvement by highlighting how well the healthcare system is functioning and where there are opportunities to improve.

BHI manages the NSW Patient Survey Program, gathering information from patients about their experiences and outcomes of care in public hospitals and other healthcare facilities.

BHI publishes a range of reports and information products, including interactive tools, that provide objective, accurate and meaningful information about how the health system is performing.

BHI's work relies on the efforts of a wide range of healthcare, data and policy experts. All of our assessment efforts leverage the work of hospital coders, analysts, technicians and healthcare providers who gather, codify and supply data. Our public reporting of performance information is enabled and enhanced by the infrastructure, expertise and stewardship provided by colleagues from NSW Health and its pillar organisations.

bhi.nsw.gov.au