

# **Improving Outpatient Efficiency Through Nurse-led Telephone Discharge**



**Surgical Referral/Discharge  
Nurse**

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**CAIRNS BASE HOSPITAL**



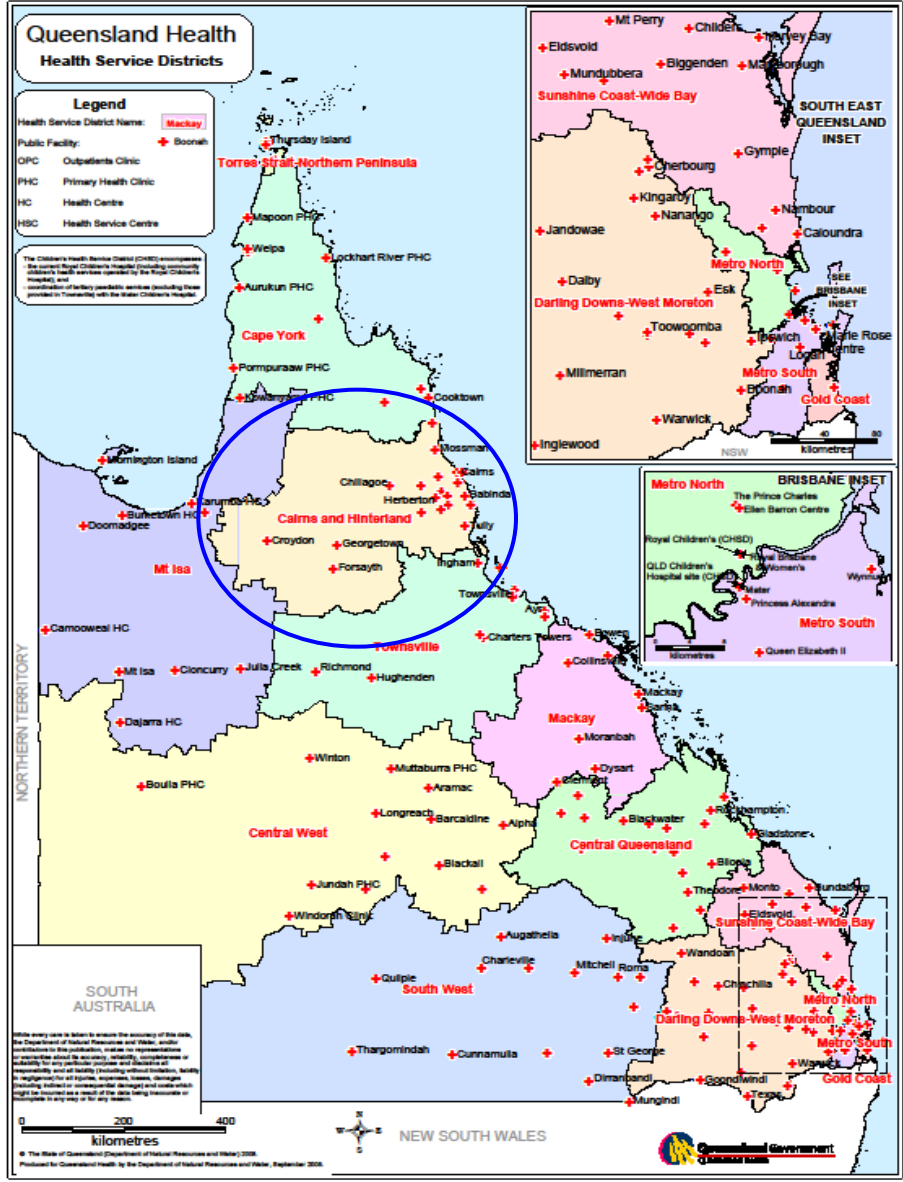
# Aim of the project

To have the **right patient**  
at the **right clinic** with the **right**  
**preparation** and at the **right time**

**Queensland Health  
Health Service Districts**

- Legend**
- Health Service District Name: Mackay
  - Public Facility: + Boonah
  - OPC Outpatients Clinic
  - PHC Primary Health Clinic
  - HC Health Centre
  - HSC Health Service Centre

The Children's Health Service District (CHSD) encompasses the current Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) paediatric inpatient and ambulatory health services operated by the Royal Children's Hospital and paediatric inpatient and ambulatory health services operated by other paediatric units across Queensland.



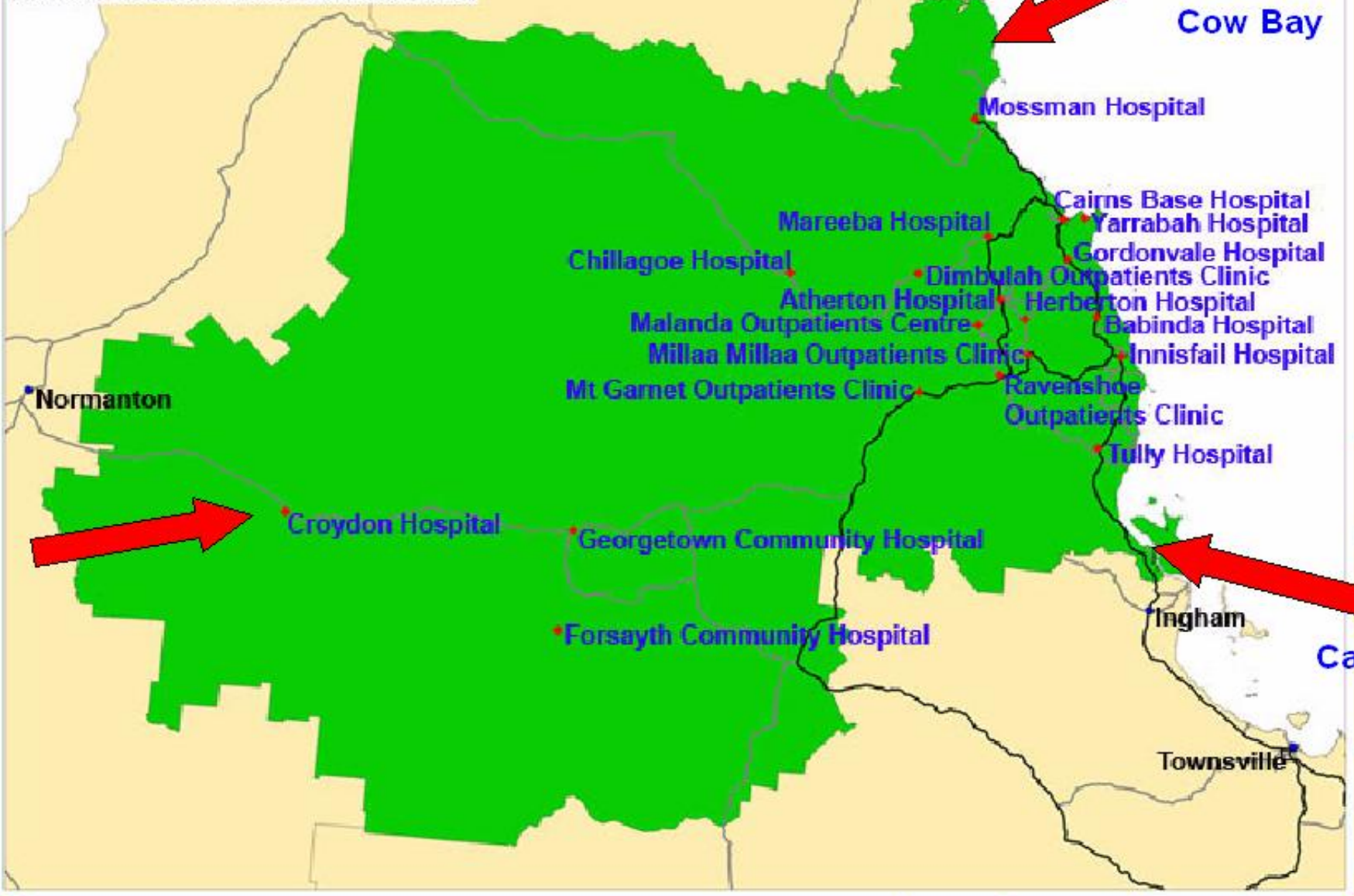
# Cairns and Hinterland Health District

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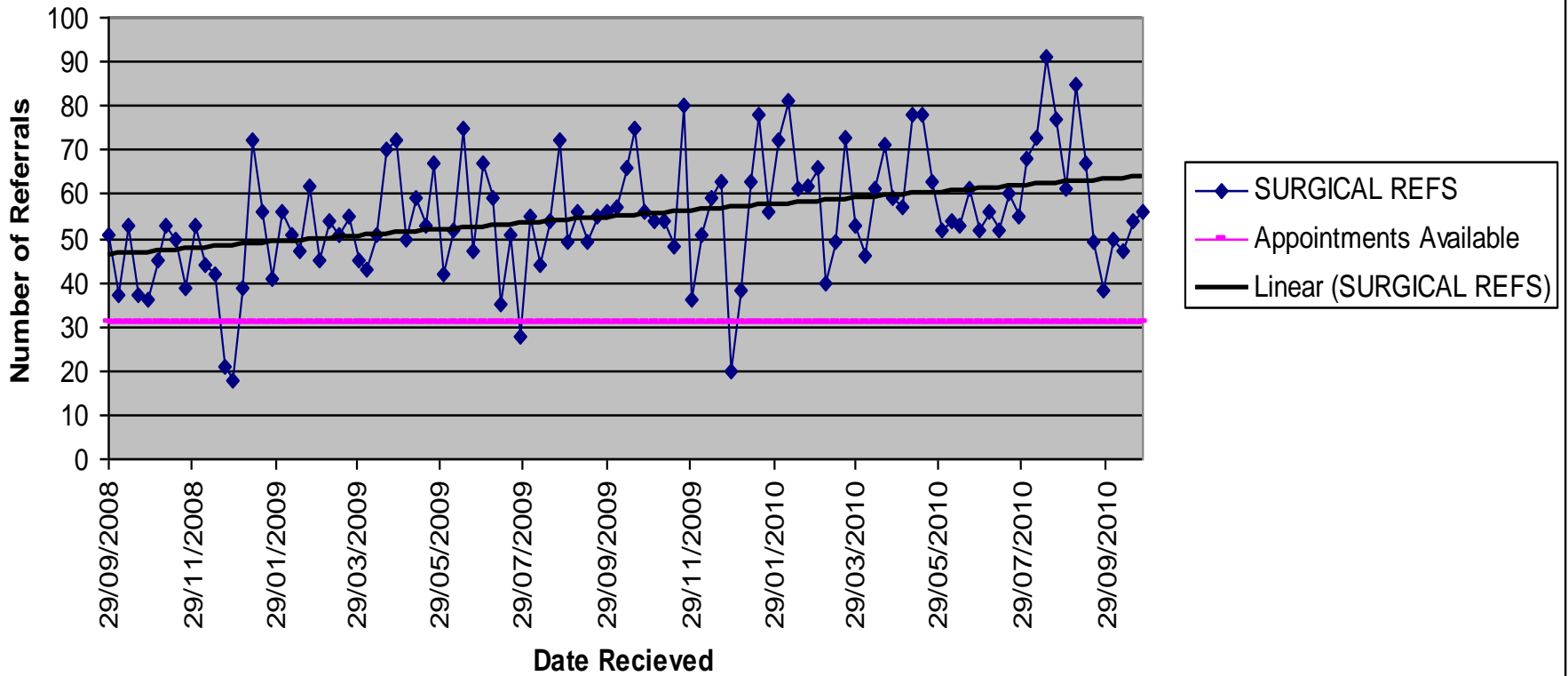
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Cairns & Hinterland Health Service District



## General Surgical Outpatient Referrals Recieved Weekly Between September 2008 and September 2010 Compared to Appointments Available





# **The Surgical Referral/Discharge Nurse**



# Issues Identified

- Incomplete referrals leading to inaccurate categorisation
- Workup not done and results not available at the time of the clinic
- All patients were being reviewed postoperatively
- Limited follow up for remote patients



# Two Key Roles

- The new referrals review program
- The discharge and results review program



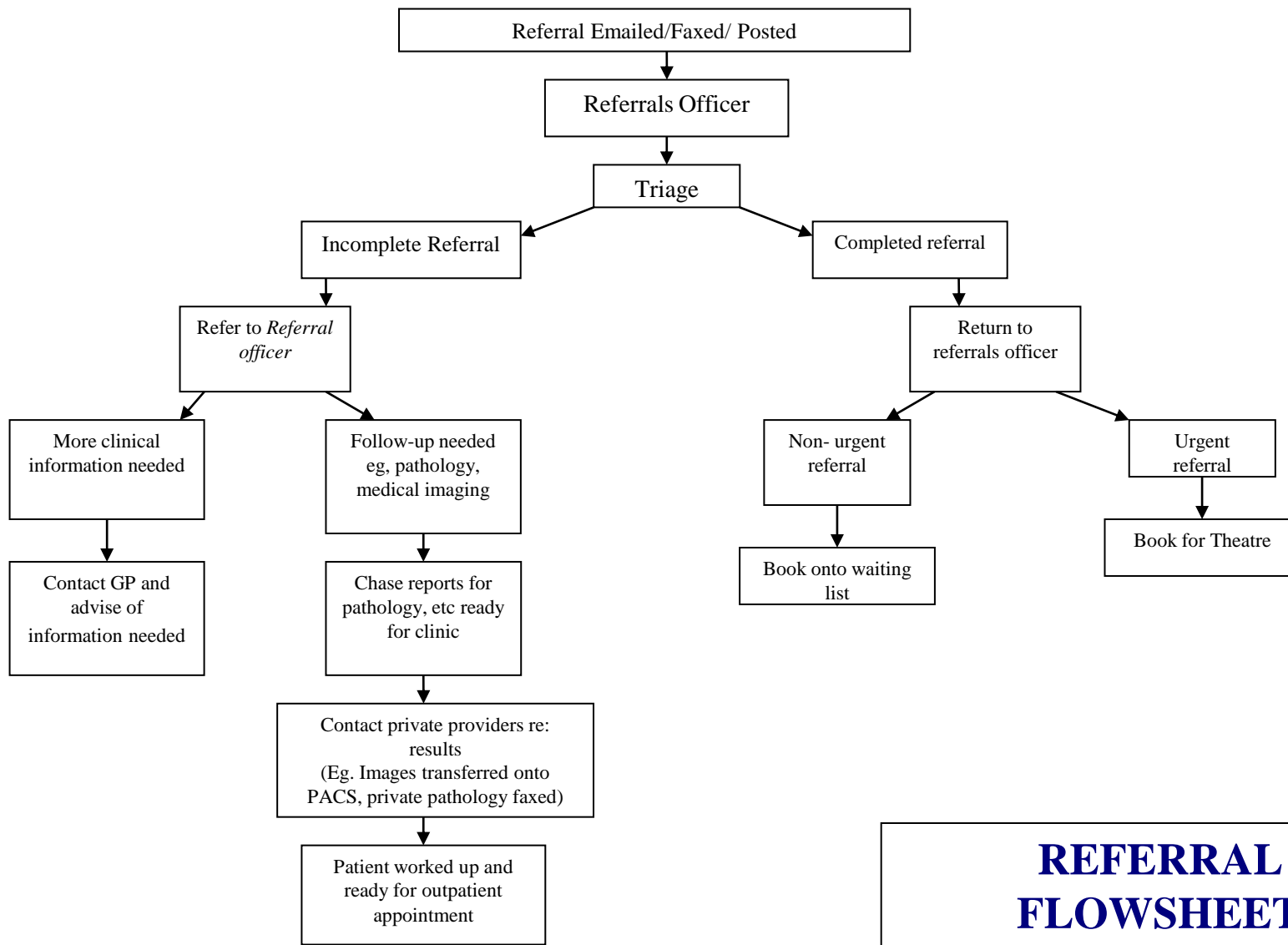
# The new referrals review program

- To improve the management of patients requiring further workup or redirection to alternative services



# The new referrals review program

- Contacts GP where insufficient info has been provided
- Arrange pre-investigations
- Ensure results are available at the appoint
- Areas: General surg, breast cancer investigation, and future with vascular surg



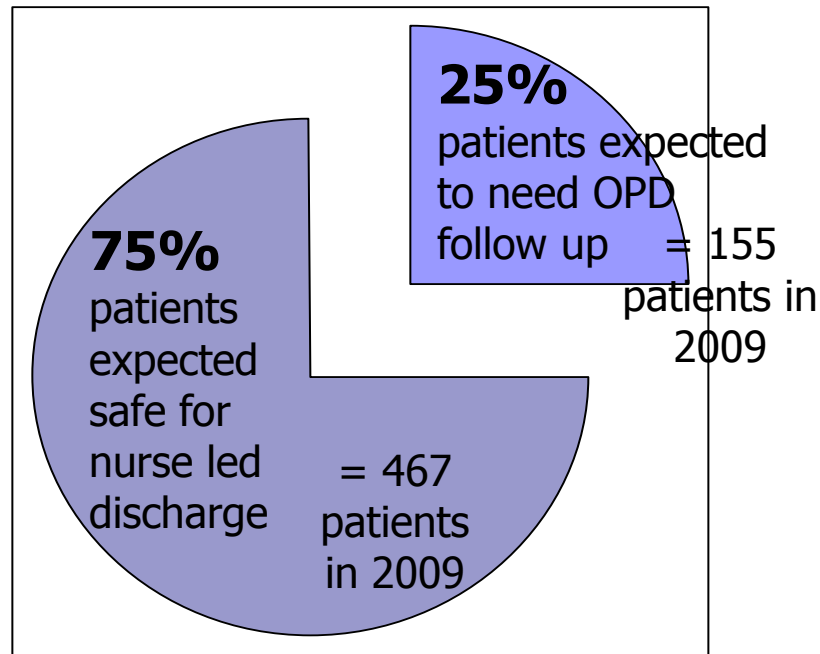
**REFERRAL FLOWSHEET**



# The discharge and results review program

- Clinically driven process allowing a large volume of post operative patients to be followed up and clinically supported post discharge by a clinical nurse

2009 = 623 patients treated with lap appendicectomy, lap cholecystectomy, inguinal/umbilical hernia repair



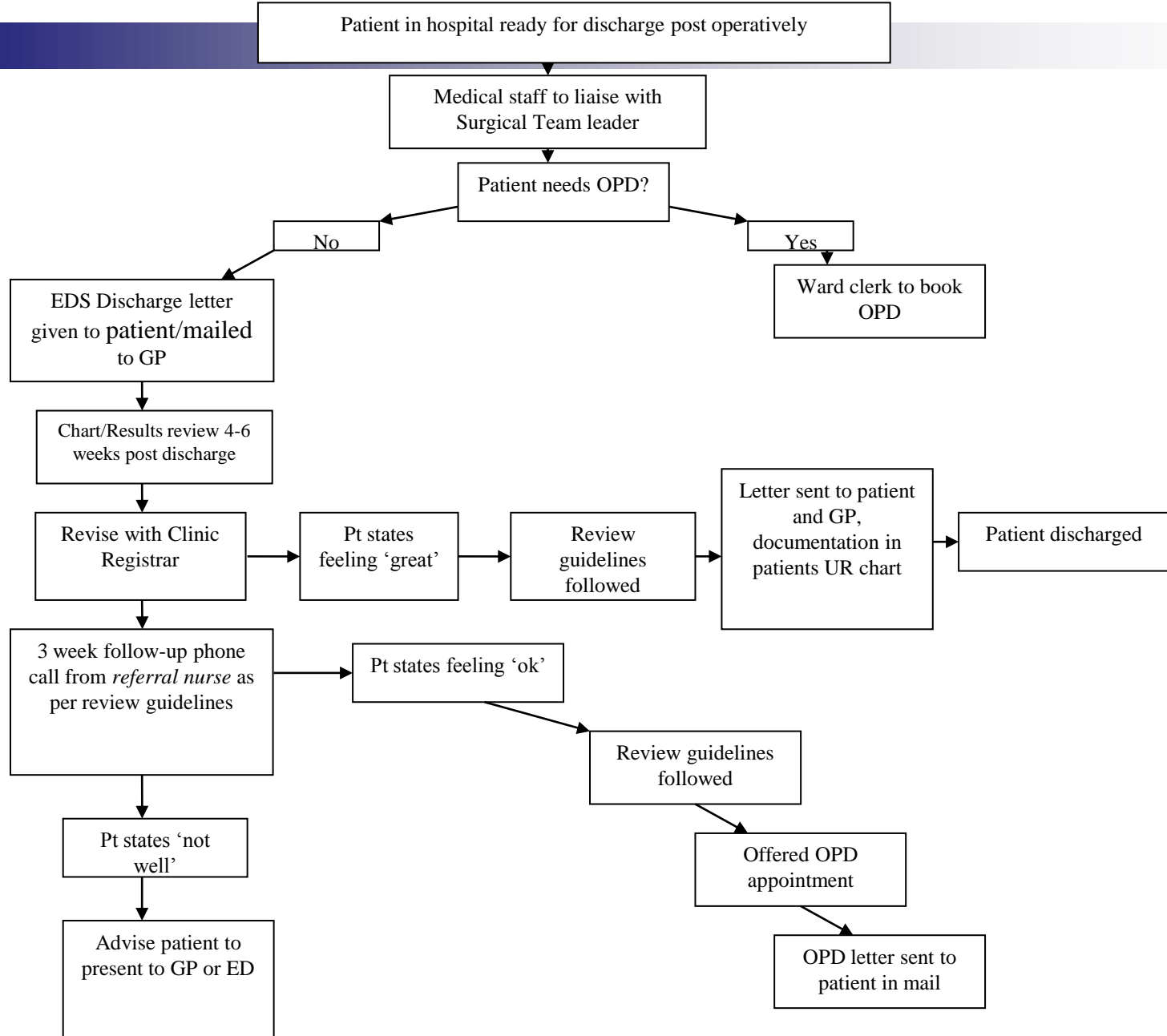
Target Number of 'chart reviews' for trial period = 283 patients

Total Number of patients discharged from project during trial period = 380 patients



# The discharge and results review program

- Factors to influence if patient is for a chart review
  - Diagnosis
  - Co-morbidities
  - Complications
  - Location
  - Surgeon preference



**FOLLOW-UP CHART REVIEW FLOWSHEET**

**Review Guidelines**

Patients Name: .....

Review Date: .....

Date of Birth: .....

UR Number: .....

Operation Performed & Date: .....

a) How are you feeling? .....

b) Wound Description.

- Wound healed
- Suture/staples still in situ
- Warm to touch
- Remains closed - no dehiscence

Have you been to the GP for review? .....

c) Surrounding Skin:

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Healthy <input type="checkbox"/>      | Dry/scaly <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Eczema <input type="checkbox"/>       | Hardening/induration <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Inflammation <input type="checkbox"/> | Maceration <input type="checkbox"/>           |
| Blistered <input type="checkbox"/>    | Cellulitis <input type="checkbox"/>           |
| Oedema <input type="checkbox"/>       |   |

d) Exudate:

- |                                   |                                |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Nil <input type="checkbox"/>      | Low <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> | Heavy <input type="checkbox"/> |

Type:

- |                                      |                                     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Serous <input type="checkbox"/>      | Purulent <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| Haemoserous <input type="checkbox"/> | Sanguinous <input type="checkbox"/> |

Odour:

- |                              |                                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Nil <input type="checkbox"/> | Offensive <input type="checkbox"/> |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|

e) Are continuing to experience pain or is the intensity decreasing? .....

f) Are you taking any pain medications? .....

g) Any fever/temperatures? .....

h) Are you tolerating oral food and fluids? .....

i) Have you had any changes in bowel or bladder function? .....

j) Are you back at work? .....

k) How is your exercise tolerance? Is your walking more limited than previous to the operation? .....

l) Post-op hernia – Are you continuing not to lift heavy objects for up to 6 weeks? .....

m) I am happy with your GP following you up, or would you like an outpatient clinic appointment? .....

n) Any other concerns/questions you have? .....

Chart and guidelines reviewed with Surgical Registrar

Yes  No  Why? .....

Outcome of review:

.....  
.....  
.....

## 2011 STATS

| Date                  | Chart Review Referrals | OPD follow-up required | Re -Admitted | Unable to contact | Total Discharged |
|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 01/01/11 - 07/01/11   | 5                      | 1                      | 0            | 1                 | 8                |
| 08/01/11 - 14/01/11   | 16                     | 1                      | 0            | 3                 | 15               |
| 15/01/11 - 21/01/11   | 17                     | 2                      | 0            | 2                 | 15               |
| 22/01/11 - 28/01/11   | 23                     | 0                      | 0            | 3                 | 23               |
| 29/01/11 - 04/02/11   | 8                      | 0                      | 0            | 1                 | 8                |
| 05/02/11 - 11/02/11   | 4                      | 0                      | 0            | 1                 | 4                |
| 12/02/11 - 18/02/11   | 10                     | 0                      | 0            | 0                 | 10               |
| 19/02/11 - 25/02/11   | 15                     | 1                      | 0            | 1                 | 14               |
| 26/02/11 - 04/03/11   | 14                     | 0                      | 0            | 1                 | 14               |
| 05/03/11 - 11/03/11   | 19                     | 0                      | 0            | 1                 | 19               |
| 12/03/11 - 18/03/11   | 26                     | 0                      | 0            | 0                 | 26               |
| 19/03/11 - 25/03/11   | 21                     | 2                      | 0            | 1                 | 19               |
| 26/03/11 - 01/04/11   | 16                     | 1                      | 0            | 3                 | 15               |
| 02/04/11 - 08/04/11   | 7                      | 1                      | 0            | 1                 | 6                |
| 09/04/11 - 15/04/11   | 13                     | 0                      | 0            | 2                 | 13               |
| 16/04/11 - 22/04/11   | 12                     | 3                      | 0            | 3                 | 9                |
| 23/04/11 - 29/04/11   | 17                     | 1                      | 0            | 0                 | 16               |
| 30/04/11 - 6/05/11    | 14                     | 1                      | 0            | 0                 | 13               |
| 7/05/11 - 13/05/11    | 26                     | 1                      | 0            | 0                 | 25               |
| 14/05/11 - 20/05/11   | 24                     | 3                      | 0            | 0                 | 21               |
| 21/05/11 - 27/05/11   | 17                     | 1                      | 0            | 2                 | 16               |
| 28/05/11 - 3/06/11    | 26                     | 1                      | 0            | 1                 | 25               |
| 04/06/11 - 10/06/11   | 17                     | 2                      | 0            | 0                 | 15               |
| 11/06/11 - 17/06/11   | 17                     | 0                      | 0            | 0                 | 17               |
| 18/06/11 - 24/06/11   | 12                     | 1                      | 0            | 1                 | 11               |
| 25/06/11 - 1/07/11    | 20                     | 0                      | 0            | 2                 | 20               |
| 2/07/11 - 8/07/11     | 16                     | 0                      | 0            | 1                 | 16               |
| 9/07/11 - 15/07/11    | 25                     | 1                      | 0            | 2                 | 24               |
| 16/07/11 - 22/07/11   | 8                      | 1                      | 0            | 4                 | 7                |
| 23/07/11 - 29/07/11   | 10                     | 2                      | 0            | 4                 | 8                |
| 30/07/11 - 5/08/11    | 17                     | 0                      | 0            | 2                 | 17               |
| 06/08/11 - 12/08/11   | 22                     | 2                      | 0            | 3                 | 20               |
| 13/08/11 - 19/08/11   | 20                     | 0                      | 0            | 3                 | 20               |
|                       |                        |                        |              |                   |                  |
| <b>YEAR TO DATE</b>   | <b>517</b>             | <b>28</b>              | <b>0</b>     | <b>44</b>         | <b>489</b>       |
| <b>OVERALL TOTALS</b> | <b>1039</b>            | <b>54</b>              | <b>1</b>     | <b>89</b>         | <b>985</b>       |

(Overall totals since April 2010)



# Patient Satisfaction

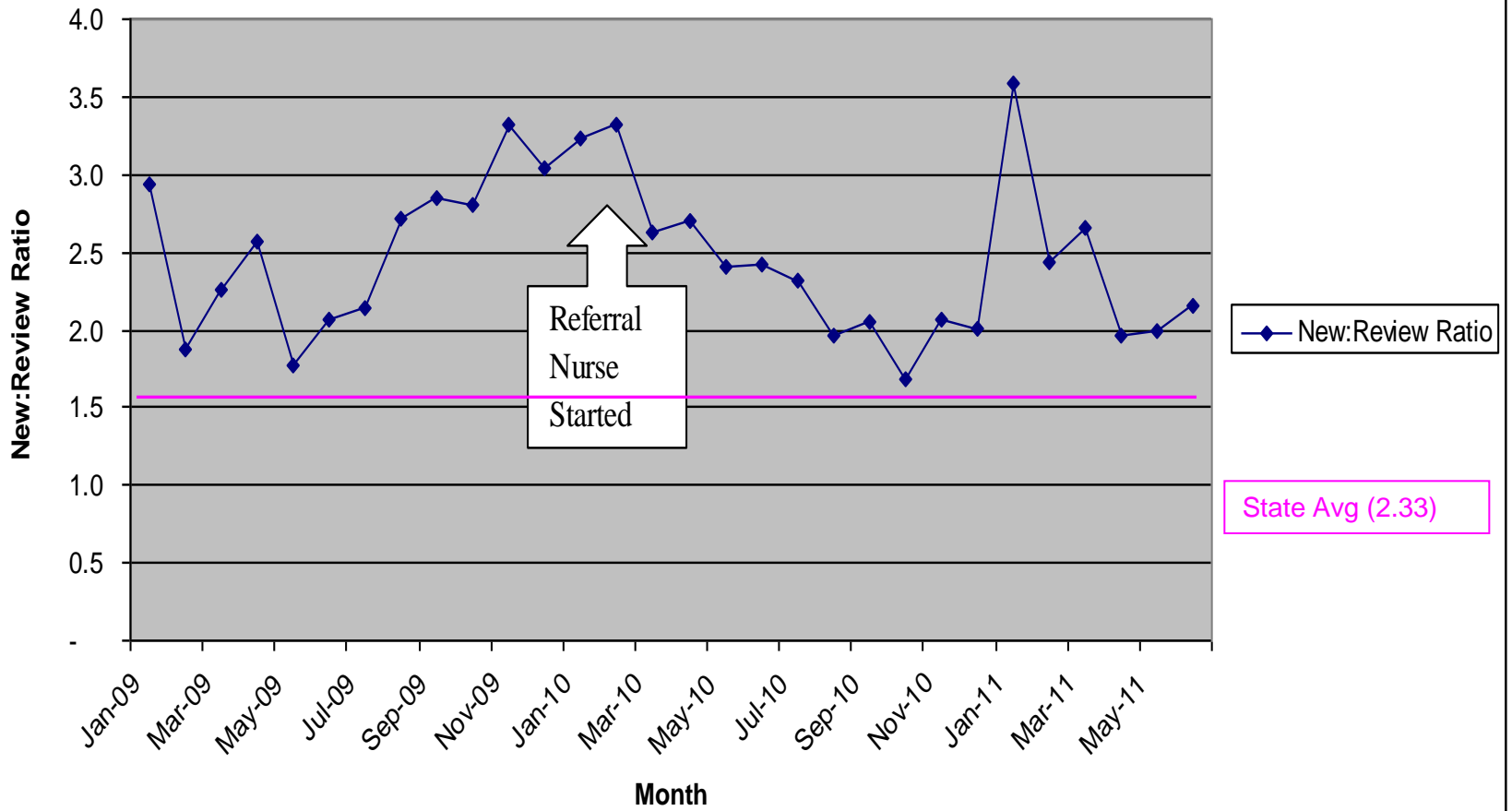
- Minimises inconveniences and stress
- Time efficient and convenient
- Identifies complications and issues promptly
- Allows the opportunity for patients to ask questions/discuss issues



# Patient Satisfaction

- Allows follow up for remote patients including those without private telephone access
- Can still be successful for patients with language barriers/hearing impairment
- Surgeon satisfaction: improvements in appropriateness of patients seen in OPD

### New:Review Ratio for general surgical clinics at the Cairns Base Hospital



# Number of patients waiting for appointments by Category

| Category  | 1   | 2   | 3   | UC | Grand Total |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|----|-------------|
| 4/10/2010 | 161 | 581 | 295 | 33 | 1070        |
| 8/02/2011 | 7   | 150 | 63  | 32 | 252         |

# Summary

- Making successful changes in the new to review ratio
- Patients can be accurately categorised
- Patients attend clinics with the necessary work up done
- Post operative management is on a needs basis
- Long term benefits – reduction in outpatient waiting lists
- More efficiently run outpatient department