Hospital-based facilities

Palliative care is provided in a range of health care settings, including neonatal units, general practices, acute hospitals and residential and community aged care services. This section presents information on public acute and private hospital-based hospice care units.

Data for hospice care units across public hospitals are derived from the National Public Hospital Establishments Database (NPHED). Data for private hospitals, including facilities and specialised services for acute and psychiatric hospitals, are derived from the Private Health Establishments Collection, which is sourced from an annual survey collecting information relating to private hospital activities in Australia (ABS 2015). For further details on the NPHED database please see the data sources section.

Key points

- In 2013–14, a total of 124 public acute hospitals reported a hospice care unit, with just over one-third (35%) located in New South Wales.
- Of the 728 public acute hospitals (excluding public psychiatric hospitals) in Australia, about 1 in 6 (17%) had a hospice care unit.
- One-quarter (25%) of all public acute hospitals in *Major cities* have a hospice care unit.
- Of the 286 private acute and psychiatric hospitals in Australia in 2013–14, 24 (8.4%) had hospice units (ABS 2015).

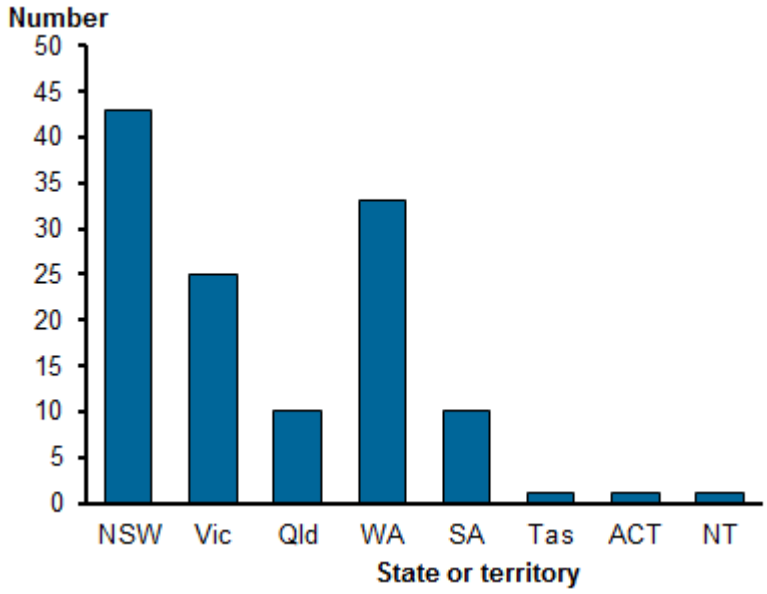
The information in this section was last updated in May 2016.

Hospice units in public hospitals

A hospice care unit is a specialist unit delivering palliative care services and can include both free-standing hospices and palliative care wards within a hospital. However, hospices are identified differently in the NPHED by jurisdictions. Although palliative care services may be delivered in a range of settings, numbers of hospice care units are reported in this section due to their specialised role in palliative care delivery. In addition, the information derived from the NPHED does not include all hospice services in Australia; for example, private health-care providers/hospitals providing hospice care services are not in scope of the NPHED.

In 2013–14, a total of 124 public acute hospitals nationally reported having a hospice care unit. This represents 1 in 6 (17%) of the 728 public acute hospitals (excluding public psychiatric hospitals) in Australia. Just over one-third (35%) of hospitals with a hospice care unit were located in New South Wales (Figure FAC.1). One-quarter (25%) of public acute hospitals in *Major cities* had a hospice care unit, 1 in 6 (18%) in *Regional* and 1 in 13 (8%) in *Remote* area hospitals.

Figure FAC.1: Public acute hospitals with hospice care units, states and territories, 2013–14



Notes

1. Data for this figure are shown in Table FAC.1.

Source: NHMD, AIHW

How has the number of hospice units varied over time across states and territories?

The number of public acute hospitals with hospice care units fluctuated from 2009–10 to 2013–14. There was an increase in the number of public acute hospitals with hospice care units from 2009–10 to 2010–11; however in 2011–12 the number decreased by 16 units (from 136 to 120), with South Australia and New South Wales accounting for the majority of the decrease (5 and 9 units, respectively). The number increased again in 2012–13, to 129 units, and decreased to 124 units in 2013–14.

Private acute and psychiatric hospitals

There were 286 private acute and psychiatric hospitals nationally in 2013–14 (ABS 2015). Of these, 24 (8.4%) had hospice units recorded. The average number of beds available in these hospice units nationally was 233, with an estimated 66,670 patient days and an average length of stay of 9.1 days (ABS 2015).

Reference

ABS 2015. Private hospitals, Australia 2013–14. ABS Cat. No. 4390.0. Canberra: ABS.

Key Concepts

Palliative care facilities and services

Key Concept	Description
Hospice care unit	A hospice care unit is a type of specialist unit delivering palliative care services and can include both free-standing hospices and/or palliative care wards within a hospital.