



Media release

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MEDIA RELEASE

Boost for Western Australian trauma patients

WA is leading the nation in our care for victims of traumas such as road crashes, with the appointment of Australia's first State Director of Trauma Services, Dr Sudhakar Rao.

People recovering from accidents such as car crashes, work injuries, falls and major disasters such as cyclones and plane crashes, can heal better under a more cohesive system, Dr Rao said.

"We can do better for our patients," he said.

"We have identified problems and gaps in the way we care for trauma patients and this focus at a State level will give us the ability to fix these problems for the first time."

"We are not just talking about care in hospitals – we need to improve the coordination of care for patients from the accident site to rehabilitation or long-term care," he said.

Each year thousands of people are treated for trauma injuries at Western Australia's major trauma centre at Royal Perth Hospital and other hospitals around the State.

"Patients with trauma injuries are often cared for by several different agencies such as St John Ambulance and the Royal Flying Doctor Service before they reach hospital and this new role will improve communication and cohesion between these groups," Dr Rao said.

He said the improved coordination of trauma services would make it easier for trauma specialists at tertiary hospitals to increase trauma training to paramedics and hospital staff in country areas.

Department of Health Director General Dr Neale Fong announced the new position, saying that trauma injuries cost Australian society about \$2 billion each year.

“This includes loss of earnings as well as the cost of social welfare, recovery and emergency services and across the health system in general,” Dr Fong said.

The announcement is the latest in a range of initiatives designed to strengthen trauma services in WA. The State’s first dedicated trauma service was established at Royal Perth Hospital in 2006, under Dr Rao’s leadership. A dedicated trauma ward is under construction and due for completion in January next year.

Dr Rao established Western Australia’s first registry of trauma data 12 years ago and has been instrumental in the planning of trauma services for the new \$1.1 billion Fiona Stanley Hospital at Murdoch due to be completed in 2012.

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