

**Title:** Outpatient Website: Creation process, expansion state-wide and effects on referral quality, clinic processes and patient access. Dr Liz Webber GPLO Tasmanian Health Service- Southern region

**Purpose:** To inform referrers and patients about the availability, scope, and access requirements of outpatient services in order to improve the quality of referrals and patient access to services.

**Rationale:** Clarity would assist the sending of appropriate referrals to the correct place to be managed in a timely way. Measurable outcomes would be a reduction in duplication of referrals, streamlined administration including a reduction in phone calls, a reduction in lost or misdirected referrals and streamlined patient management. Additionally the information provided would allow understanding of the consequences of failure to attend appointments and the enforcement of policy regarding this.

#### **Enablers and requirements for the website:**

The website was designed to be useful to time pressured GP, whilst being accessible for patients in a state with low average literacy.

- Money for the project and staff to continually maintain the site.
- Expertise in website creation and management
- Accurate waiting time data,
- Defined policy and procedures in the clinics.
- Cultural understanding of the benefits of transparency and collaboration.
- Clinicians within disciplines and between disciplines and between hospitals to agree on referral requirement and clinic scope.
- Pages were to be open to all, easy to access via computer, mobile friendly, quick to navigate,

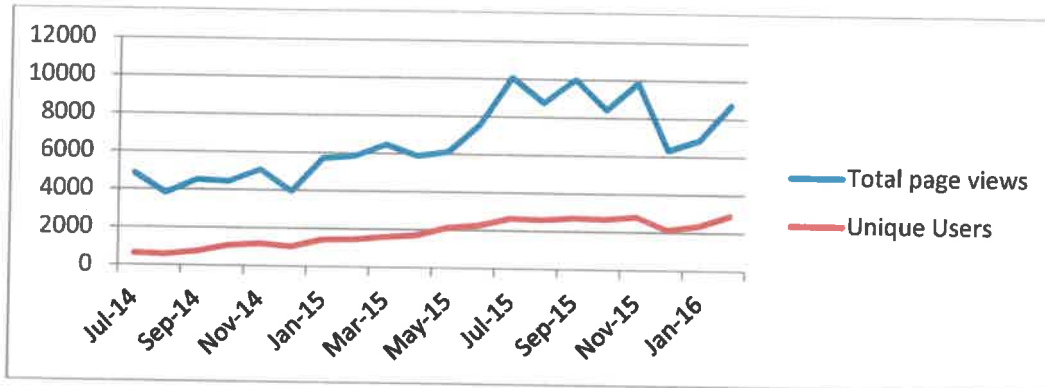
#### **Outcomes**

- The website was initially launched July 2014 with information about the South of the state.
- Evolution to a State-wide website in July 2015 reflecting the success in the south.
- Triage, policy and procedures for Outpatients have been reviewed, tightened and are visible to all and are driving state-wide consistency of policies and procedures regardless of hospital or discipline.
- Waiting time data has improved in accuracy and visibility
- Duplication of referrals is reduced and inappropriate/inadequate referrals are now returned to the sender for clarification or redirection rather than accepted and potentially wasting appointment time. This "stick" educates GPs and encourages quality referrals in the first instance
- Some cultural changes regarding the benefits of transparency and collaboration within and between services has occurred.
- Ongoing plans for further state-wide service consistency for which the website is an enabler.
- The coincidental and synergistic introduction of HealthPathways to Tasmania by the then Medicare Local created an opportunity for close linkages and co-operation which the GPLOs facilitated in order to provide state-wide continuity and seamless information for referrers.
- The usage data is one indicator of the success of the site with total page views increasing from 4854 ( in July 2014) to 9836 in November 2015, and 8723 in February 2016 and the number of unique users increasing from 627 ( in July 2014) to 2895 (in February 2016). 72% views are on computer with 28% using tablet or mobile phone.
- Research into changes in numbers of inappropriate, incomplete referrals, GP and hospital clinician satisfaction, and failure to attend rates is ongoing with analysis linked to website usage analysis and this will inform further improvements.

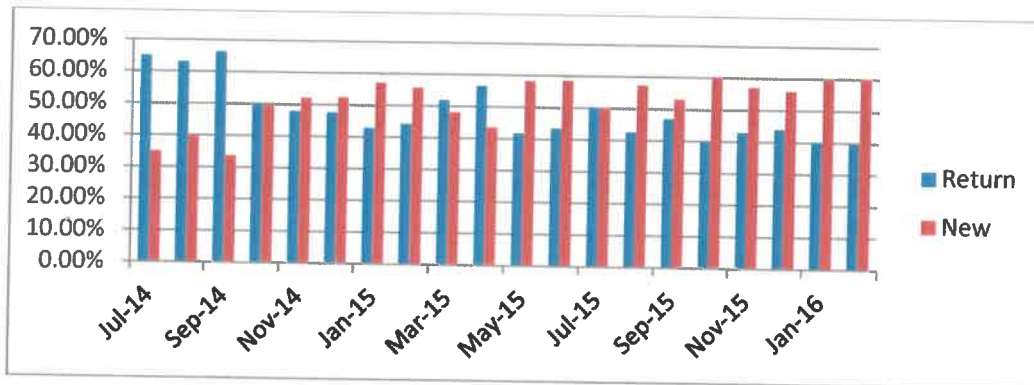
Some outcomes

**Title:** Outpatient Website: Creation process, expansion state-wide and effects on referral quality, clinic processes and patient access. Dr Liz Webber GPLO Tasmanian Health Service- Southern region

Use:

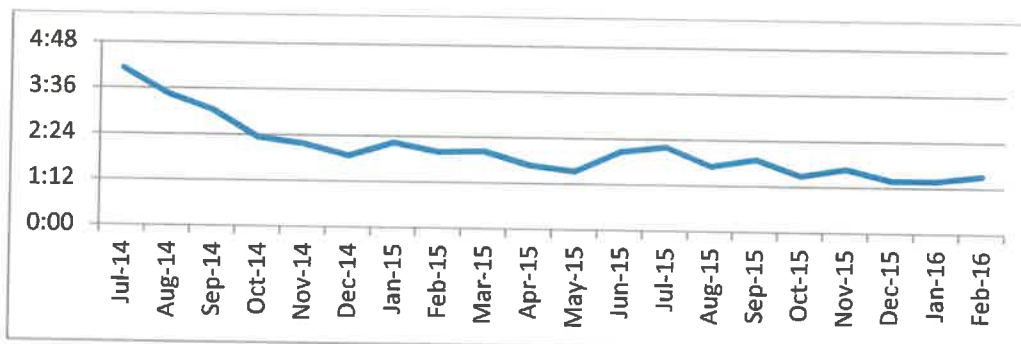


Users that are New and Return users



Time on site reduces perhaps with familiarity or greater clarity of use.

Vertical Axis is average visit length in minutes.



**Waiting list Total in 2015** Added 26 639 patients, Removed 26 975 patients.

Survey monkey provisional data (Masters research)

90% hospital clinicians in clinic new of the website wait times and 33% thought provision of wait times was inappropriate number thought the wait time were inaccurate

80% GPs new of the website (selection bias?), 58% of those have used the waiting times to counsel their patients re destination etc