

Aim to halve child health service waiting times

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The Director of Health says the department is on track to halve the waiting times for key child health services, despite growing demand and a backlog of cases.

Kim Snowball has told a hearing of the Parliamentary Education and Health Committee that significant progress is being made.

Last November, the child health screening process was criticised by the Auditor General for failing to deliver all recommended health checks, and long waiting times for diagnosis and treatment.

Mr Snowball says the department is reshaping the system to target children most in need.

"So those most critical we obviously want to treat fastest, so we're setting those programs in place now through the Child and Adolescent Health Service," he said.

He says progress is being made in key areas of speech pathology, occupational therapy and physiotherapy.

"We're on a trajectory now where we're heading towards halving the waiting times for both assessment and treatment and we just think that's fantastic progress."

The Child and Adolescent Health Service's head Phil Aylward has told the committee that private contractors may be used for health checks.

Mr Aylward says while the department has hired more staff and will open child health centres on Saturday mornings, other measures are needed.

"We're also looking at ways where the private sector and the not-for-profit sector can be involved as well because I think that is very important in terms of partnering with us to allow those assessment processes to be undertaken," he said.

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