

Frequently asked questions about the new parking arrangements for disabled people who use a wheelchair

What is happening?

We are building a new 24-bed Short Stay Unit (SSU) in the Austin Hospital Emergency Department (ED).

I am a person who uses a wheelchair. How will this project affect me?

During the building works there won't be as many ambulance bays out the front of the ED. Non-emergency ambulances will need to drop off and pick up patients using the parking area on level 4 of the Harold Stokes Building forecourt.

Emergency ambulances will still use the ambulance bays in front of ED.

People currently using the level 4 car park outside the Harold Stokes Building will now be asked to park in the Austin Tower car park.

Please be assured that there are plenty of car parking spaces reserved for disabled drivers in the Austin Tower including dedicated car spaces for people who use wheelchairs.

Disabled permits must be displayed on all vehicles using disabled car parks across Austin Health.

Will there be any parking costs?

Yes. Any patients and staff who use the Austin Tower car park need to pay for parking. Concession parking is available for any patients or family members who qualify for this support.

How do I access the concession parking?

Please visit Metro Parking on Level B3 of the Austin Tower carpark for daily concession parking passes.

How is this charge fair and equitable?

Austin Hospital needs to charge for car parking to cover the cost of building, managing and maintaining our car park facilities including payment of a substantial loan for the recent Martin St car park expansion. Government funding is not available to finance hospital car parks.

It is very important that the public parking fee system is fair and equitable to all car park users. Anyone who uses parking facilities at Austin Health is required to pay the public parking fees including our staff.

We offer concession parking rates for people who qualify for this support. We believe most people who currently use the car park on level 4 outside the Harold Stokes Building will qualify for these rates.

We have more than enough parking and plenty of disabled spaces available in our Austin Tower car park to meet people's needs. This includes patients and visitors who use wheelchairs.

As a person who uses a wheelchair, how can you guarantee me access to a disabled car park space in the Austin Tower?

Any person who uses a wheelchair who needs access to car parking in the Austin Tower can call our Metro Car Parking Office to ensure that a dedicated disabled parking space is reserved for you next to the Metro Office.

We ask you to ring the car parking office between 6am and 10pm the day before your visit. The contact number is 9496 4512.

When you arrive at the car park, please alert staff by pressing the intercom button or tooting your horn. Metro staff will then raise the boom gate for you and open your reserved space.

Disabled permits must be displayed on all vehicles using disabled car parks across Austin Health.

What do I do if I encounter any practical issues to do with parking?

Metro Office staff will render all assistance necessary depending on the requirements of each person e.g. paying for parking.

When will these changes take effect?

The level 4 car park outside the Harold Stokes Building will be closed to the general public from Monday 20th April 2015.

Is this a permanent change?

This is likely to be a permanent change. Most patients arriving at Austin Hospital in non-emergency ambulances have appointments in the Outpatients Department. We therefore expect that this new parking arrangement will better suit the needs of non-emergency ambulance vehicles. It will also ensure that parking outside ED is prioritised for emergency vehicles. This will reduce the likelihood of overcrowding of vehicles outside the Emergency Department.

How do we plan to tell you about this change?

New signage will be in place from mid-March 2015 to tell you about the change.

What is a Short Stay Unit?

A Short Stay Unit (SSU) is an area in the ED where patients go when they need assessment and observation without necessarily needing admission to hospital. Sometimes patients stay for more than 24hrs and can then go home. There will also be four beds to care for patients who have complex mental health needs.

Why is this happening?

The Austin Hospital has one of Victoria's busiest Emergency Departments.

The expansion of the Short Stay Unit will increase ED's capacity to accommodate a substantial growth in treatment demand. It will also provide the ED with more flexible working spaces which allow us to deliver contemporary, best practice models of care.

When is this happening?

Building works will commence in April 2015.

When will the building be finished?

The construction works is expected to conclude in July 2016.

Where will the building be built?

The new building will be built on pillars over the ED drop off area. This is the entrance from Burgundy Street.

How can I give you feedback about these changes?

We are committed to working with you during this time of change.

You can make a suggestion through the Austin Health internet page at www.austin.org.au.

You can fill in a My Say form. These forms are available in the level 4 entrance to the Harold Stokes Building; outside the Centre for Patient Experience located on level 1 of the Austin Tower and also in all wards and outpatient areas.

You can contact the Centre for Patient Experience by email: PatientExperienceOffice@austin.org.au or by phoning 9496 3566.

We thank you for your patience and understanding and we look forward to supporting you through this change.

