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# Number of available beds for admitted patients

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**Important note: This is an archived metadata standard from the AIHW Knowledgebase. For current metadata standards and related information please access METeOR, the AIHW's Metadata Online Registry at <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au>**

## *Identifying and Definitional Attributes*

Data Dictionary: NHDD  
Knowledgebase ID: 000255                      Version number: 1  
Metadata type: DATA ELEMENT  
Registration Authority: NHIMG                      Admin status: SUPERSEDED  
   Effective date: 30-JUN-97  
Definition: For acute and psychiatric hospitals the average number of beds during the financial year which are immediately available to be used by admitted patients or residents if required. They are immediately available for use if located in a suitable place for care with nursing and other auxiliary staff available, or available within a reasonable period. Surgical tables, recovery trolleys, delivery beds, cots for normal neonates, emergency stretchers/beds not normally authorised or funded and beds designated for same-day non-inpatient patient care should be excluded.  
  
Private hospitals, acute and psychiatric beds are now licensed by the State health authority.  
Context: Institutional health care: necessary to provide an indicator, even if only partial, as to the availability and level (size) of services for an establishment.

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## *Relational and Representational Attributes*

Datatype: Numeric  
Representational form: QUANTITATIVE VALUE  
Representation layout: NNNN  
Minimum Size: 1  
Maximum Size: 4  
Data Domain: NOVAL                      Count the number of beds for each category as shown in Guide for use  
Guide For Use: 1. The number of available beds on the last weekday before the 30

June.

2. The average number of available beds for the financial year.

The average number of beds should always be shown as a whole number. Beds in wards which were closed for any reason (except weekend closures for beds/wards staffed and available for five days per week) should not be included. The average is to be calculated from monthly figures where available (if not, basis is to be stated).

For nursing homes, the number of approved beds includes beds approved for respite care but excludes beds for staff.

Related metadata: has been superseded by Number of available beds for admitted patients version 2  
relates to the data element Establishment type version 1

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### *Administrative Attributes*

Source Document:

Source Organisation: National minimum data set working parties

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Comments: For purposes of national reporting, the Resources Working Party agreed that, if admitted, a person is an inpatient and it is therefore not necessary to distinguish admitted patients and non-inpatients (see definition of 'Admitted patient', chapter 3)

The Resources Working Party agreed that the definition of available beds was difficult and led to unsatisfactory levels of comparability but that the data item provided a useful partial indicator of the availability of services and should remain within the data set.

It rejected an Australian Institute of Health proposal to collect beds according to a range of categories (rehabilitation, psychiatric) which was based on recommendations stemming from the Morbidity Working Party. Because of the general problem of fluidity of beds the Resources Working Party had earlier rejected having total beds disaggregated into major categories (such as in the 'Hospital Utilisation and Costs Study' 1, 1985-86 and 2, 1987-88) in a national minimum data set.

It was not usually a problem to record whether establishments provided a particular service but it was a problem to determine beds available for that service.

There is clearly now greater emphasis on services rather than beds and this is recognised also at Commonwealth level.

In response to a request from the Health Department of Victoria, the definitions of available beds were amended to clarify the position on beds / wards staffed only five days per week.

The previous version of this data element specified two measures of available beds:

(a) the number of available beds on the last working day before 30 June; and

(b) the average number of available beds for the year ended 30 June.

The National Health Data Committee considered that (a) was a much less reliable measure than (b). It therefore decided to exclude (a) from the national minimum data set for institutional health care.

This data element is subject to review during 1997, with the development of a single instrument to enable collection of information in nursing homes, aged care hostels and community aged care packages (Department of Health and Family Services).

### [Data Element Links](#)

#### [Information Model Entities linked to this Data Element](#)

NHIM [Aggregate resource](#)

#### [Data Agreements which include this Data Element](#)

NMDS - Public hospital establishments [From 01-Jul-89 to 30-Jun-97](#)

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