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### Hospital Infections in Australia Cost \$1 Billion in Lost Bed Days

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Infections caught in hospital are costing the Australian healthcare system more than 850,000 lost bed days, according to a new study by Queensland University of Technology.

Associate Professor Nick Graves, from QUT's Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation, said there were 175,153 cases where patients had acquired an infection during their hospital stay.

"If rates were reduced by just one per cent, then 150,158 bed days would be released for alternative uses, allowing an estimated 38,500 additional admissions annually," he said.

The results, which have been published in the Australian journal *Healthcare Infection*, calculate the economic consequences of healthcare-acquired-infections arising among admissions to Australian acute care hospitals.

"Healthcare-acquired infection rates are about five per cent of all admissions at the moment and with bed days valued at 1005 AUD each, the total economic burden is close to 1 billion AUD per annum," he said. Professor Graves said the bulk of the costs were faced by the most populous states of New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria.

He said a national programme was being undertaken to encourage healthcare workers to wash their hands before and after touching every patient, which had the potential of being effective at reducing infection and cost-effective.

Queensland University of Technology (2009, September 2). Hospital Infections In Australia Cost \$1 Billion In Lost Bed Days. ScienceDaily.

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