Sue Carter
Shadow Minister for Health & Community Services,
Senior Territorians, and Arts & Museums

Where are the promised extra 75 nurses?

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Shadow Minister for Health Sue Carter MLA has expressed concern at the lack of action by the Northern Territory Government in relation to its commitment to increase nursing numbers.

‘All Territorians - and nurses in particular - will remember that during the last election campaign that Labor promised an extra 75 hospital nursing positions if elected. To date there is very little sign of them,’ Ms Carter said today.

‘Only now has the new Health Minister launched a recruitment and retention program, when we are in the lead up to the next election. The Minister has realised that this is another commitment that the Government has let slide and it is now trying to play catch-up.

‘One of the main reasons nurses leave their profession is because they get frustrated with not being able to provide good care to their patients. Yesterday, The Australian newspaper reported comments by John Buchanan, Deputy Director of Sydney University's Australian Centre for Industrial Relations that -

‘...the (Australian hospital) system is relying on the goodwill of nurses ... that goodwill will not last for ever ... hospitals are in really bad shape.’

‘This is a problem that sadly is reflected in the Territory.’

‘Alice Springs Hospital frequently has to close beds and reduce services due to an inability to attract and retain nurses – Labor promised more nurses two years ago and failed to deliver. The end result is overworked staff – who subsequently leave.

‘A future Country Liberal Party Government will address the chronic nursing shortages in the Territory, by again making the health care system a place in which nurses are attracted to work.’

‘Today's announcements by the Minister are too little, too late, and health professionals know that,’ Ms Carter concluded.

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