Dr PETER TOYNE
MINISTER FOR HEALTH

3 May 2005

BUILDING A HEALTHIER TERRITORY

The Territory Government has lifted spending on Health by 43% since 2001-02 to provide better health services, Minister for Health Dr Peter Toyne announced today.

Dr Toyne said under Budget 2005, Health and Community Services spending is now a record $687 million.

BACKING HOSPITALS

Budget 2005 includes record spending to support our hospitals:
- Alice Springs Hospital funding has been boosted to $81.2 million in Budget 2005
- Royal Darwin Hospital funding has been boosted to $156.4 million

In Budget 2005, Tennant Creek Hospital will receive $8.1 million; Katherine Hospital $20.3 million; and Gove District Hospital $15.7 million.

BETTER HEALTH SERVICES

Budget 2005 includes a range of initiatives to improve health services to Territorians.

Highlights include:
- $1.9 million extra ongoing for Alice Springs Hospital for improved medical staffing levels in the Intensive Care Unit and Emergency Department
- $1.9 million to operate the Royal Darwin Hospital 12-bed hospice
- $500,000 a year to improve care and support services for Territorians needing interstate radiotherapy treatment
- extra $2 million for renal services closer to patients’ homes, with a further $2.4 million in capital spending for renal services
- $500,000 for new NT Health Direct service providing a free 24 hour a day medical advice phone line
- an extra $1.5 million a year ongoing for mental health services, including $200,000 for better 24-hour emergency response and $350,000 to establish four additional child and adolescent psychiatrist positions in rural centres
- an extra $600,000 a year for community-based residential mental health care services in Darwin and Alice Springs
- $250,000 a year for suicide prevention work in regional and remote communities
- $900,000 for computing equipment in all remote clinics
- continuing funding for employment of 100 extra nurses in our system
BACKING THE COMMUNITY SECTOR

Budget 2005 delivers significant funding boosts to health and community services Non-Government Organisations.

They will receive grant indexation to meet the real costs of providing these important services to our community.

This means an increase in grant payments of $1.13 million in Budget 2005, increasing by a further $500,000 each year ongoing.

BACKING FAMILIES

Budget 2005 backs Territory families with:
- $3.7 million to subsidise childcare – making childcare cheaper
- $2.5 million for a Birthing Centre at Royal Darwin Hospital and $300,000 for staff training
- $400,000 for extra home birth and maternity services
- $200,000 a year for nurses to study locally as midwives
- $500,000 for an intensive family support service
- $340,000 to enhance services for people with chronic pain
- $600,000 extra for oral health equipment and services
- an extra $1 million for services for high-need children in care
- $300,000 to support seven new remote youth services
- $500,000 to employ Indigenous cadets, foster care support workers and new community resource staff to work in remote communities
- an extra $430,000 for the Nhulunbuy Special Care Centre and $390,000 contributed towards a 12-bed sobering up facility in Nhulunbuy
- $8.1 million to support Territory Seniors and the Pensioner Concession Scheme

BETTER INFRASTRUCTURE

Better health services across the Territory will be backed with a strong investment in health infrastructure in Budget 2005. Health capital works is a total $33.2 million, with $8.3 million for repairs and maintenance.

Highlights include:
- $9.27 million for Alice Springs Hospital fire safety upgrades
- $650,000 to upgrade health staff accommodation in Alice Springs
- $380,000 to complete other Central Australian health centres
- $1 million each to upgrade Flynn Drive and Alice Springs Hospital renal facilities, providing additional renal stations and services for acute patients
- $1.2 million for community-based residential facilities in Darwin and Alice Springs for 24-hour support for people with mental illness

“The Martin Government is continuing to back Territory families with funding boosts and better access to important health services,” Dr Toyne said.

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