Eye Surgery Soars at RDH

The number of eye procedures performed at Royal Darwin Hospital jumped 40% last year.

The Health Minister Chris Burns said there were 808 procedures carried out during 2007 compared to 576 in 2006.

Dr Burns said the extra 232 procedures were due to longer surgery hours and improved equipment at the eye clinic.

“The hospital's focus on improving Territorian’s eye health has certainly paid off,” he said.

Since early last year, the ophthalmology department has doubled its theatre sessions from two to four – one surgery session runs for 12-1/2 hours.

More than $350,000 in new equipment, including additional cataract instruments and tools to diagnose retinal disease, has also been installed.

“The improved eye service builds on several initiatives delivered under the Territory Government’s Better Hospitals plan,” Dr Burns said.

“The plan is designed to upgrade programs, services and infrastructure at our public hospitals to benefit both patients and staff.

“At Royal Darwin Hospital we have introduced several initiatives including setting up a Rapid Admission Unit that has resulted in a 50% reduction in the time patients have to wait for admission; opening a new birth centre and a new ward; refurbishing another ward and implementing an elective surgery campaign that cut the overdue waiting list by 31%.

“We have also employed 318 extra nurses and 115 doctors since 2001.

“The Better Hospitals plan will be strengthened by the Federal Government’s injection of $5.3 million to further cut elective surgery waiting lists and $12 million to improve the NT’s public hospitals.”