Matt Conlan
Shadow Minister for Health
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SAME OLD SONG

Recruiting more nurses to the Northern Territory is only half the equation when it comes to ensuring properly staffed hospitals says the Territory Opposition.

Retention is as important as recruitment but the new Health Minister, Kon Vataskalis, has nothing to say about how he will staunch the 34% turnover of Territory nurses each year.

“The 34% turnover rate of Territory nurses every year places enormous strain on the operation of Territory hospitals,” says Matt Conlan, Shadow Minister for Health.

“The huge attrition rate lies at the heart of the Territory Government’s repeated failure to achieve its own staffing targets in Territory Hospitals.

“It costs more than $10,000 to put a new nurse on a ward, in a workforce of 1900 that means $6.5 million will bleed from the health budget for recruitment costs alone.

“The huge turnover of nursing staff also negatively impacts on the quality of patient care in Territory hospitals.

“It’s impossible for a nursing workforce experiencing an extremely high level of transience to provide a level of care comparable to that of a stable workforce.

“Despite the glaring need to improve retention rates of Territory nurses the Minister is mute on this critical subject.

“Yes we need to recruit more nurses but we also need a plan to retain a higher percentage of those nurses we recruit.”

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