22 January 2010

Territory’s First Oncology Unit Open Day

A major milestone for Territorians – and an NT Government election commitment -was achieved today with the official opening of the Territory’s Alan Walker Cancer Care Centre.

Acting Chief Minister Delia Lawrie, Minister for Health Kon Vatskalis and Federal Member for Solomon Damian Hale attended the official opening by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon in front of 130 invited guests, including the family of the late Professor Alan Walker AM.

Mr Vatskalis said Territorians will have an opportunity to take a look inside the facility with an Open Day tomorrow.

"This is a fantastic day for Territorians, particularly those needing treatment for cancer who will be able to stay in Darwin with their loved ones," Mr Vatskalis said.

The Centre, which will begin assessing its first patients next month, will feature the latest radiation oncology technology as well as a fully equipped haematology and chemotherapy day care centre.

The Commonwealth Government provided $28 million to build the Centre and equip it with specialist radiation machines. The NT Government will fund the annual operating costs of the facility, including staffing costs.

"Our Governments are working together to deliver first class cancer care to Territorians,' Mr Vatskalis said.

The Centre will be staffed by a team of 20 in its first year, including oncology specialists, physicists, radiation therapists, nurses and administration staff. About 300 patients will be treated in its first year of operation.
Mr Vatskalis also paid tribute to the late Professor Alan Walker AM (1931-2007) at the Opening.

"Alan Walker was a great and humble man whose work as a paediatrician helped improve child health outcomes in the Territory for more than 40 years," he said. "The Territory Government is proud to honour his legacy."

Territorians will be able to inspect the state of the art Cancer Centre on the grounds of Royal Darwin Hospital tomorrow from 10 am – 12 pm. To access the Centre, enter RDH Campus off Rocklands Drive onto Florey Avenue and drive to the end of Florey Avenue to enter the AWCCC car park on Burnett Avenue.

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