“The Government’s announcement today that it plans to build a new centralised stand-by power system at Royal Darwin Hospital is long overdue,” says Shadow Health Minister Matt Conlan.

“Since the hospital’s construction, a hotch-potch of generators have provided back-up to the mains power supply.

“For the past 18 months, the hospital has also used a diesel powered generator as additional back-up – a legacy of the disastrous power black-outs that shut-down Darwin’s northern suburbs in September and October 2008.

“I’d be interested to know the cost of that temporary arrangement to taxpayers.

“It’s good the Government has finally acknowledged that a patch-work of generators is hardly an acceptable state of affairs in a major capital city hospital.”

Mr Conlan said the $43million allocated for infrastructure upgrades at Royal Darwin Hospital comes out of the capital works budget.

“The Government needs to pin-point time frames that the back-up power source and the other infrastructure enhancements will be completed.

“It also needs to identify exactly what system it will be using as the back-up power supply, its capacity and what it will cost.

“This Government has a habit of rolling items announced in one budget into the next.

“I want a commitment the three projects will be completed by next financial year and not re-voted into future budgets.”

Further comment: Matt Conlan 0408 805 338