Delivering Better Health Services Now for Territory Families

Record funding for Territory hospitals, more funding to increase the health and child protection workforce, boosts to renal and oncology services and a new mental health hotline are part of the record funding for health and families provided in Budget 2010.

The Minister for Health and Families, Kon Vatskalis, said this year’s Budget provides a $1.16 billion to boost health services with more doctors, nurses and better hospitals.

“The Henderson Government is delivering now for Territory families, with continued record investments to boost our hospitals and improve access to health services for all Territorians,” Mr Vatskalis said.

“Since 2002 we have provided funding for 127 more hospital beds, 157 more doctors and 588 more nurses.

“Funding in Budget 2010 will also give Territorians access to the highest number of public hospital doctors and nurses in Australia, with 5.7 nurses and 1.6 doctors per 1000 people.

“We are also investing in our future with Budget 2010 by delivering better health facilities, increasing the health workforce and a boost for oncology and renal services.

“The only way we are going to continue seeing the real gains in the health and lives of Territorians, is by continuing to fund our health services and increase access to health services for more Territorians.”

RECORD HOSPITAL FUNDING

Budget 2010 delivers a record $483.6 million for hospitals to deliver better facilities and patient services with:

- $292.8 million for Royal Darwin Hospital, a 161% increase since 2001
- $129.2 million for Alice Springs Hospital, a 140% increase since 2001
- $28.6 million for Katherine Hospital, a 102% increase since 2001
- $20.5 million for Gove District Hospital, an 85% increase since 2001
- $12.5 million for Tennant Creek Hospital, a 105% increase since 2001.
BUILDING THE TERRITORY’S WORKFORCE

Budget 2010 continues the Henderson Government’s investment to increase the Territory’s health workforce with:

- $14.7 million for 76 additional children protection workers, support staff and an improved case management system
- $9.5 million ongoing for new nursing ratios across Territory hospitals, delivering an extra 95 nurses
- $620,000 for eight additional staff in the Royal Darwin Hospital pathology unit
- $1.5 million for Territory surgeons’ market allowances
- $580,000 for five extra environmental health officers
- $500,000 to increase health and community services school-based apprentices to grow our health workforce.

BOOSTING RENAL SERVICES

This year’s Budget continues to increase renal facilities ensuring more Territorians can access services closer to home.

Katherine’s renal facility will be expanded with $2.84 million providing an extra eight dialysis stations, while the Tennant Creek renal facility will be expanded with $1.7 million in funding.

MENTAL HEALTH FOCUS

Budget 2010 delivers new initiatives to support patients with a mental illness and vulnerable members of the community.

The Government is providing $930,000 for a 24-hour mental health hotline to help people with a mental illness get appropriate treatment sooner by providing health professionals with a round-the-clock triage service.

“This funding will include recruiting an additional six mental health professionals to staff the hotline 24 hours a day,” Mr Vatskalis said.

“This hotline will provide immediate advice to health staff on the appropriate treatment available when a person suffering from a suspected mental illness presents at a hospital or emergency department.

“This will help to reduce the time for referrals to mental health services and put patients in contact with the right treatment sooner.”

Budget 2010 delivers an additional $9.4 million to continue the rollout of new Secure Care facilities in Darwin and Alice Springs, and $2.3 million to enhance services.
ONCOLOGY SERVICES

Budget 2010 provides a $7.26 million boost to deliver additional staff and expanded chemotherapy services at the new $22 million Alan Walker Cancer Care Centre.

The funding includes:
- $3.2 million to support the operation of the centre
- $2.48 million for allied health and support services
- $820,000 for expanded chemotherapy services
- $750,000 for self-care patient accommodation at the refurbished Mirambeena Street facility.

WORKING FUTURE

The Henderson Government continues its commitment to improving the health of Indigenous Territorians.

The funding includes:
- $1.5 million to continue the development of culturally secure Indigenous child protection and family support services in regional centres
- $1.2 million to continue the implementation of co-ordinated patient care and services for Indigenous patients diagnosed with chronic conditions
- $1.35 million for additional child protection workers and to expand services for children in care
- $300,000 to expand the Child Abuse Taskforce with more staff to increase investigative activities in remote communities
- $300,000 to continue the expansion of the Sexual Assault Referral Centres service in Darwin, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and Katherine, and boost services in remote communities
- $500,000 to partner with the Australian Government in delivering remote family violence support services across the Territory.

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