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NT Reaffirms Commitment to Renal Care on World Kidney Day

Health Minister Kon Vatskalis today reiterated the NT Government’s commitment to addressing renal disease in the Territory on World Kidney Day.

Mr Vatskalis reminded Territorians to take care of their kidneys, amid warnings of the link between chronic kidney disease and other life-threatening conditions. The warnings coincide with the sixth World Kidney Day, carrying the theme - *Protect your kidneys, protect your heart.*

“Territory Labor Government has invested record amounts into renal health since coming to office, with $25 million invested in 2010 alone,” Mr Vatskalis said.

“To put that into perspective - this compares to the overall $10 million that was available for renal services in 2001”.

Mr Vatskalis said the need for renal dialysis in the Northern Territory continues to grow, as more people with kidney disease require treatment for what is often a preventable disease.

“With our record investments we have put infrastructure and satellite renal facilities in remote communities for the first time. Last year we saw the opening of a new $16.7 million, 12-station dialysis renal unit in Alice Springs.

“And this year we are set to increase capacity in Katherine from six dialysis units to 14 to improve access and continuity of service for patients from the Katherine and greater Katherine region.

“The NT is now seeing gains as a results of this significant increase, with survival rates for Territorians on dialysis now better than the national rates – just 20 years ago the NT mortality rate was 66% above the national average.”

Mr Vatskalis said chronic kidney disease increased the risk of heart problems for people with diabetes and hypertension and is also a strong independent risk factor for cardiovascular disease in otherwise healthy people.

“Nationwide 80% of those with kidney failure suffer from high blood pressure. We also know that the rate at which diabetes is causing kidney failure is increasing.”

Mr Vatskalis said that choosing a healthy diet and active lifestyle now, can prevent people from having to undergo renal dialysis and suffering the other chronic diseases we often find associated with kidney disease.  *Contact: Maria Billias 0401 119 746*