Minister Praises Commitment of NT’s Health Volunteers

Health Minister Kon Vatskalis has praised the dedication of the countless volunteers who regularly devote their time to giving support and companionship to hospital and community health patients during National Volunteer Week.

The theme of the week is *Volunteers – Every One Counts*, and runs until Friday this week.

“For many years our volunteer groups and individuals have provided wonderful support for people in hospitals and other facilities, or in their own homes,” Mr Vatskalis said.

“This includes driving people to and from medical appointments, and sitting with them to share stories and provide good cheer. Territory volunteers range from teenagers to octogenarians and they help with a wide range of activities.”

Mr Vatskalis also thanked groups such as the Drovers at Alice Springs Hospital who successfully fundraise to help buy special equipment and patient comforts that make the lives of patients more pleasant during their stay in hospital.

“The Drovers number about 70 and volunteer more than 4,000 hours per year in the hospital, making a huge contribution to the comfort of patients,” he said.

Mr Vatskalis said of special importance is the companionship that volunteers provide to palliative care patients, particularly those who may not have close family members or friends to keep them company during the final stage of their life.

“The Hospice at Royal Darwin Hospital has a strong volunteer component, including a gentleman in his 70s who has been volunteering there for more than 10 years.

“The Hospice even has a four-legged volunteer in Sam the dog, who visits several times a week.

“Volunteers put in hundreds of thousands of unpaid hours, and the support they provide is simply priceless. I wish to take this opportunity to offer them my personal thanks. The system could not run as well as it does without their commitment.

*Vision/Interview Opportunity: RDH’s Sam the Dog will be visiting RDH Hospice at 11.30am today along with Palliative Care volunteers.*

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