Minister for Central Australia, Karl Hampton, today joined the Federal Minister for Indigenous Health, Warren Snowdon, to welcome a special purpose 4WD mobile dental truck set to deliver high quality oral health care.

“The mobile dental truck will be based out of Alice Springs, and is set to service up to 8,000 people in some of the most remote areas in the Territory,” Mr Hampton said.

“I get out to some of the most remote communities on a regular basis, so I know just how isolated and distant some of these areas are.

“The Mobile Dental Truck will service people from Epenarra and Finke, to Nyrippi, Bonya, and more, improving the lives of some of our most disadvantaged Territorians.”

The $300,000 dental truck project is one of seven mobile dental vehicles being provided by the Australian Government in an $11 million, four-year, pilot program to find ways to close the gap in Indigenous dental services nationwide in rural and regional areas.

The Territory Government will cover the costs of running the mobile dental truck.

“No matter where you live, everyone has a right to high quality health facilities, and the mobile dental truck will provide a level of dental care equivalent to those living in our urban areas,” Mr Hampton said.

The Territory Government last year released the Oral Health Promotion Plan 2011-15 - a detailed strategy aimed at improving the oral health of Territorians by increasing the focus and awareness of health promotion and disease prevention.

It followed the NT Government’s hugely successful $1.5 million Dental Waiting List Blitz and investments in refurbishing dental clinics.

“Since the Dental Waiting List Reduction Program (Blitz) in November 2009 waiting times for a general appointment or check-up have gone from a maximum of 52 months to an average wait time of 13 months in Darwin, and 4 months in Alice Springs,” Mr Hampton said.

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