Minister for Alcohol Rehabilitation Robyn Lambley today inspected the potential location of an Alcohol Treatment facility on Bathurst Island and met with Traditional Owners to outline the importance of a Tiwi Island to the Government’s Mandatory Treatment plans.

Under the Government’s measures, problem drinkers placed in Police Protective Custody three times in two months will face up to 12 weeks in mandatory treatment.

Mrs Lambley said the Tiwi Islands will play an important role in the Government’s plans to reduce the impacts of problem drinking across the Northern Territory.

“Anti-social behaviour and alcohol related crime are Territory-wide problems and the Government is implementing a regionalised solution,” Mrs Lambley said.

“From July this year there will be four secure facilities located in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Nhulunbuy.

“I am keen to see capacity on the Tiwi Islands and in Tennant Creek brought online as soon as possible.

“Local member and strong advocate for alcohol reform Francis Xavier has been instrumental in pressing for rehabilitation services on the Tiwis.

“I am here today at his request to meet with Traditional Owners, inspect the proposed site for a stand-alone rehabilitation facility and to assess how the Territory Government can work with local people to deliver a solution that works for all parties.

“One proposal I put to them was that Tiwi Islanders who are sent to the Darwin Alcohol Treatment Service could be diverted midway through their 12 week rehabilitation to a facility on Bathurst Island to better reintegrate them into the community.

“I look forward to returning to the Tiwis in coming months as the Government’s Alcohol Mandatory Treatment model is rolled out.”

Arafura MLA Francis Xavier said it is important the voices of local people are heard in order to make the Government’s policy a success.

“Many Tiwi people recognise the need to get more of our people into treatment for their alcohol addiction,” Mr Xavier said.

“Today was an important step in ensuring the interests of the Tiwi people are fully incorporated into the Government’s Mandatory Treatment plans.”

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