MINISTER FOR HEALTH

MASSIVE BOOST TO TERRITORY HEALTH BUDGET

14 May, 2013

A significant funding boost into the Territory’s health system will fund increased services, the Government’s alcohol reforms, improve access to cardiac procedures, boost patient assisted travel and deliver much-needed infrastructure to regional areas.

Health Minister, Robyn Lambley, said the Country Liberals Government has shown its commitment to improving health services across the Territory in a tough budget climate.

“This is a responsible health budget that targets areas of greatest need and delivers on the Government’s key election initiatives,” Mrs Lambley said.

“The health budget finds a balance between the major urban centres and the bush and also picks up where the Mini Budget left off in identifying cost efficiencies within the agency.”

The Territory Government has budgeted $1.36 billion to Health in 2013-14 – an increase of more than $136 million on the Labor Government’s last budget and almost $100 million more than in December’s Mini Budget.

This represents a $150 million increase in Territory Government funding – up 18 per cent on last year.

Of that, the Top End Health and Hospital Service will receive $575 million and the Central Australian Health and Hospital Service receives $229 million start-up and operational funding in Budget 2013.

Budget 2013 also provides an additional $48.16 million to meet increased demand and cost pressures for health and hospital services.

An important component of the Health budget is the allocation of $35 million a year to meet the operational costs of running and managing Alcohol Mandatory Treatment facilities across the Northern Territory.

In addition, $10 million is contained in this year’s budget to upgrade and develop infrastructure for secure and non-secure rehabilitation facilities and the establishment of an alcohol mandatory treatment tribunal in line with our commitment to providing problem drinkers with a treatment pathway.

Under the Government’s plan, anybody placed in Protective Custody three times in two months will face up to 12 weeks in mandatory alcohol treatment at secure facilities in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Nhulunbuy.

Cardiac services will receive a $6.5 million cash injection in line with our 2012 election commitment.

The new money will be used to boost Enhanced Cardiac Outreach and cardiac rehabilitation services as well as the commencement of low risk angioplasty services later this year.
The Government will continue to focus on elective surgery, with an additional $4.46 million provided for an extra 400 surgeries per annum across the Territory – 258 in the Top End and 142 in Central Australia.

The Government has made a firm commitment around Patient and Assistance Travel Scheme funding with $2 million already committed to conduct a review of the scheme. A further $7.5 million is provided in Budget 2013 to meet the outcomes of the review.

The Government remains committed to delivering a Palmerston Hospital and has allocated $5 million for a hospital scoping study and master plan for the Greater Darwin Region to ensure we get the planning right.

The ongoing program of remediation works at Alice Springs Hospital will continue, with $21 million allocated for fire protection and air-conditioner upgrades.

Works will also include rectification of corridors and lift shafts, establishing a decant ward while works are underway and upgrades to medical and surgical wards.

Additionally, Alice Springs Emergency Department will receive an extra $5.51 million in 2013-14 to meet the operational costs for the new facility which is set to open next month.

The Government has provided half-a-million dollars to fund the 24-hour supported accommodation facility for clients under a Forensic Part IIa order, in line with our focus on safer communities as well as $3.86 million for secure care facilities throughout the Territory for high risk patients.

The Government has committed $940 000 to assist with the relocation and operation of the BushMob Youth Residential Rehabilitation Service in Alice Springs and $1.2 million to increase nursing and administrative staffing in Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine watch houses from July.

Seniors affected by increased utility tariffs have again been supported, with Budget 2013 providing $7.9 million to subsidise eligible pensioners. This is in addition to the continued ongoing support of $22.54 to the Pensioner and Carers Concession Scheme which continues to be the most generous of its kind in the country.

A slew of remote and regional health facilities will receive additional funding in Budget 2013, including $13 million to upgrade the Emergency Department at Gove District Hospital.

Numbulwar clinic will be replaced at a cost of $6.17 million, Canteen Creek will get $5.3 million for a new a health centre and there will be upgrades at Kaltukatjara ($3.5 million) and Maningrida ($1.62 million).

In addition, $4.4 million has been allocated to upgrade air-conditioning systems in bush centres including at Gove Hospital and Milikapiti, Minjilang and Nguiu on the Tiwi Islands.

Central Australian youth rehabilitation service provider, BushMob, will receive $940,000 in Budget 2013 and $330,000 has been provided to implement the recommendations of the ‘Gone Too Soon’ report.

Media Contact:
Camden Smith 0488 588 754