MINISTER FOR ALCOHOL REHABILITATION

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MUST MOVE ON AGED CARE SANCTIONS

26 July, 2013

The Federal Health Minister must listen to the concerns of key Northern Territory health stakeholders and improve standards in Territory aged care centres so a ban on facilities taking new patients can be lifted.

Health Minister, Robyn Lambley, says up to 12 Royal Darwin Hospital beds are currently filled with aged care patients who are prevented from moving to accredited aged care providers by the Commonwealth sanction.

“The Commonwealth regulates aged care facilities and since sanctions were introduced earlier this year a backlog of seniors awaiting aged care placements has occurred in RDH,” Mrs Lambley said.

“While I understand the need for the highest possible standards at our aged care centres, I don’t understand why the Commonwealth hasn’t moved quicker to ensure the facilities are up to standard and can commence taking new clients again.

“The Australian Nursing Federation and the Australian Medical Association have both identified aged care patients as one source of bed block at Royal Darwin Hospital.

“In fact when asked on ABC Radio today what could make the most immediate change to current demand levels at the Royal Darwin Hospital Emergency Department, the Australian Nursing Federation’s Yvonne Falch pointed squarely at the aged care bed block issue.

“For many months I have been impressing upon Federal Minister for Health Tanya Plibersek the importance of resolving this as soon as possible so that pressure does not build in Royal Darwin Hospital’s Emergency Department.

“The Commonwealth dropped the ball when it came to monitoring conditions within Territory nursing homes.

“It is their responsibility to ensure standards are maintained within aged care services and it is appalling that their lack of action is now hurting Territorians, both those aged care patients awaiting placement, and people presenting at the nation’s busiest Emergency Department.

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