Media Release

Robyn Lambley
Minister for Health

**Flu outbreak stretches hospital resources in Alice Springs**

15 September 2014

Minister for Health Robyn Lambley has visited Alice Springs Hospital today to thank staff for their hard work in managing the influenza outbreak in the town.

“The past four weeks have been extremely busy for the Centre for Disease Control and the hospital, with an influx of up to 160 presentations per day at the hospital, representing a total of about 4000 in the past month, with many patients presenting with flu like symptoms,” Mrs Lambley said.

“This is significantly higher than normal, and represents the town’s highest influenza activity since the 2009 swine flu pandemic.

“This has been a challenging winter period at the hospital with all staff stretched to the limit.

“The combination of peak admissions and staff also affected by illness has meant that a number of strategies needed to be implemented to ensure patients were seen and assessed in a timely manner.

“A Registrar from Baker IDI was allocated to assist with medical admissions, enabling medical teams to continue to focus on current inpatients.

“Two primary health care nursing staff joined the nursing roster and nursing Educators and Clinical Nurse Managers have been rostered to cover shifts.

“Patients who were able to receive acute nursing care at home were admitted to the Hospital In the Home service.

“Hospital In The Home usually manages 18 patients and their capacity has been increased to 25 with a focus on patients with complex wounds and flu cases.

“It seems like we have seen the worst of the flu season and hopefully the workload on the hospital should be easing from now on.

“I’d like to thank staff for their commitment and dedication to patient care during this busy time and I’d like to thank patients for their patience and understanding.”

**Media Contact:** Phoebe Stewart   0438885774  (08) 8928 6649