Budget boost enhances Palmerston Hospital

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The Northern Territory Government is adding new features to the Palmerston Regional Hospital to ensure best-practice design and provide state-of-the-art diagnostic tools.

Chief Minister Adam Giles said the Government had listened to clinicians and expanded the scope to provide extra floor space and facilities.

New features include:

- Increased floor size to 22,400 square metres from the previous 18,000;
- Under-cover car parking for 75 per cent of the car parks, including all staff vehicles;
- On-site sterilising services, including a reverse osmosis plant.

Mr Giles said the capital cost of the project, with enhanced features was now $170 million, of which the Federal Government has contributed $110 million.

An additional Budget allocation of $30 million has been made for fittings, furniture, ICT and medical equipment, including:

- The latest low-temperature sterilisation system used for endoscopic instruments such as telescopes, camera systems and laryngoscope light bundles. The cold sterilisation method is less harsh on instruments and more cost effective;
- Computerised tomography (CT and CAT scans);
- Microscopes for ear, nose and throat, ophthalmology, plastics and general use – crucial for identifying fine anatomical details.

“Our additional investment increases the scope of the hospital to better meet the service needs of the local community,” Mr Giles said.

“It supports the Government’s objective to future proof the hospital. It also enhances the operational efficiency and safe clinical practice.”
Mr Giles said staff and patients would have access to fully integrated and resilient infrastructure and systems, incorporating electronic data and telecommunications to meet information and reporting needs.

“This will include an advanced telehealth link between staff and patients,” he said.

“Telehealth will be utilised for pre-admission, outpatient and inpatient consultation, staff education and communication with the community.”

Infrastructure Minister Peter Chandler said construction was ahead of schedule.

“The Country Liberals are delivering on a key election commitment to the people of Palmerston and the rural area,” Mr Chandler said.

“Labor achieved nothing except empty rhetoric in 12 years.”

Mr Chandler said completion of the ground floor slab this week was a significant project milestone.

“Construction of sheer walls, lifts and stair wells is currently around 85 per cent complete,” he said.

“This work is being undertaken in sequence to enable structural connection of the first-floor slab which is currently being formed up.

“Under slab, drainage and waste services are completed and service trades continue to install sewer, water, stormwater and drainage services externally to the building line.

“Scaffolding has been erected to approximately 40 per cent of the ground floor to allow for ongoing first floor progress.

“Local people are working on site, with 24 trade packages already awarded to local businesses.

“Local companies continue to register their interest for selected trade services and supply through the ICN gateway.

“There are currently about 80 tradespeople working on the site and it’s anticipated that 300 people will be employed on the project at its peak.”

Construction is scheduled for completion in March 2018.

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