

AMA in jail plea

LAUREN ROBERTS
Health Reporter

JAILED Territorians aren't getting appropriate mental health care, experts fear.

Australian Medical Association NT president Dr Rob Parker said the 25-bed Complex Behaviour Unit at Darwin's Holtze prison was managed by correctional services, but it should be moved under the health department umbrella. He said if managed by health, prisoners would get better treatment.

"If we had health staff there, we could probably manage most of the patients in the CBU," he said.

"They can't get the treatment they need in prison."

Dr Parker said when the unit opened in 2014, the NT's then chief psychiatrist proposed a \$17 million a year funding model, which the then-CLP government rejected.

"It was supposed to be built as a hospital, for people with mental health issues who are prisoners," he said.

Dr Parker said the NT had the only ward in Australia

where people with acute mental illnesses mixed with prisoners.

NT Health Minister Natasha Fyles said clients held in these facilities had complex issues and as a result, required co-management from both corrections and health.

"The CBU was originally approved and designed as a purpose built secure mental health facility and is currently being managed by NT Correctional Services as a complex behaviour unit for prisoners and supervised persons with in-reach forensic mental health and other health services provided by Department of Health," she said.

"At this stage there are no plans to transfer management of this facility, and the Department of Health and Corrections will continue a collaborative approach."

Opposition Health spokeswoman Lia Finocchiaro said there was a critical need for more improved mental health services in the NT.

"The safety of clients, staff and the wider community should be a priority," she said.



CareFlight staff join in the fun at Palmerston Hospital's open day

Picture: TOP END HEALTH SERVICE

Crowds tour new Palmo hospital

PHILLIPPA BUTT

PALMERSTON residents have had their first look at the new regional hospital at its open day yesterday.

Attendees got the chance to participate in tours of the hospital and meet many of the staff expected to work there.

The new hospital will have a dedicated therapy space, a gym and, at some stage, a hydrotherapy pool.

There will also be a 24-hour emergency department, which CareFlight will be able to take patients to, however, those who are critically ill or have life-threatening

conditions will still be transferred to the Royal Darwin Hospital as soon as possible.

The hospital will have maternity services, both antenatal and post-natal, but will not provide birthing services until staffing levels are increased.

Voices raised for farmers

MUSIC legend John Farnham will lead a line-up of top Aussie talent helping to bail out drought-stricken farmers, headlining a charity concert.

Hay Mate: Buy a Bale – A Concert For The Farmers will take place in Tamworth on October 27 and is tipped to include a host of stars including country music performer Adam Harvey and singer Guy Sebastian. Negotiations are under way to show the event live on TV and viewers will be able to phone in donations as it goes to air. All money will go to Rural Aid, which provides support to farmers hit by drought.

Fundraiser for quake victims

THE Indonesian community in Darwin is holding a fundraiser today to help victims of the Lombok earthquakes.

The Indonesian Consulate along Harry Chan Ave will host the event, from 11am to 3pm, at its premises opposite the Darwin Council Chambers.

Several strong earthquakes hit Indonesia's Lombok island last week, causing buildings to collapse and the deaths of hundreds of people. Thousands more remain homeless.

The community members will sell food, drinks and raffle tickets to raise much-needed support funds.

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