Minister for Health Dr Peter Toyne said the Martin Government is on track to fulfil its election promise to create an additional 75 nursing positions in hospitals.

“I am proud of the progress which has been made on the number of nurses – we already have an additional 38 positions and more are on the way,” Dr Toyne said.

“There are 16 extra critical care nurses, 11 clinical nurse educators, 3 renal nurses, 5 midwifery nurses, a wound care nurse, acute pain nurse and a emergency department nurse.”

“This means we have 38 more nursing positions throughout the Territory compared to when this Government came into office – and we’ll meet our target of 75 nursing positions.”

Another step will be taken in the right direction today when the Minister for Health Peter Toyne announces 132 study grants for medical professionals.

Royal Darwin Hospital ’s Simon Spillett who is among 53 nurses who have been given grants to pursue studies will receive his personally from the Minister at RDH.

“After completing my graduate year and various placement, I found that working in theatre was challenging and rewarding,” Mr Spillett said.

“I enjoyed the dynamics of nursing within the theatres as there are so many skills and activities yet to learn.”

22 nursing students at Charles Darwin University will also be given grants, along with 57 people studying medicine, allied health, public health, community services, aboriginal health work, health management, social work and children’s services.”

“This is another example of the Territory health system retaining and retraining staff to provide the best possible system for patients,” Dr Toyne said.

This follows a new nurse pay deal which will see their wages rise by at least 11% over the next three years.

The Northern Territory Public Sector Nurses 2003 – 2006 Certified Agreement and Medical Officers (Northern Territory Public Sector) Certified Agreement 2003 – 2006 will be presented to the Australian Industrial Relations Commission today.
“The nurses will get an 11% increase over the next three years, 5% in the first year, 3% in the second and 3% in the third,” Dr Toyne said.

Many nurses will actually see their pay packets increase by up to 14% under the Northern Territory Public Sector Nurses 2003 – 2006 Certified Agreement.

“Despite this, the Opposition spokesperson on Health, Sue Carter – continues to whinge and whine about a lack of nurses.”

“We have 38 more than when the CLP was in Government, and more are on the way.”

“Study grants are being provided to help recruit and retain nurses and an historic deal has been reached to make Territory nurses among the best paid in the country.”

“The misinformed member for Port Darwin must come to grips with the fact that the health system has moved on, grown stronger since the days of CLP neglect.”

Simon Spillett biography -

Simon was born and bred in the Territory and spent more than 20 years working for Territory Housing before deciding to study nursing.

The 43-year-old graduated from the NT University and became a graduate nurse at Royal Darwin Hospital in March 2003.

Simon has also spent 19 years volunteering with St John Ambulance before deciding to change careers.

His scholarship will allow him to study peri-operative nursing in the operating theatre.

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