A Labor Government pre-election commitment will be delivered early next year, with construction of the Territory’s first dedicated Hospice on the grounds of Royal Darwin Hospital set to commence shortly.

Minister for Health Dr Peter Toyne told Parliament today that tender for the $3.6 million 12-bed innovatively designed project closed on February 8, and was expected to be awarded by the middle of the year.

The facility will contain 12 individual rooms with ensuite facilities and access to individual private garden areas, as well as an attractive garden water feature. A building fit-out will be provided by the Government, but community organisations will also be engaged in the process through fundraising and volunteer services.

“The Hospice is part of a broader restructure of Palliative Care Services as outlined in the recently launched Building Healthier Communities 5 year framework,” Dr Toyne said.

“As part of that project we will be examining the adequacy of palliative care services in Central Australia and the rest of the Territory.

“While there is recognition that a Hospice is the preferred model in the Top End, a different approach may be taken in Central Australia to provide better support to remote and local patients.”

Dr Toyne said the NT Government will also look at further support in Indigenous palliative care, and enhancing remote palliative care and inpatient care facilities.

“Funding has been allocated to develop an NT wide Palliative Care Strategic Plan, and to increase the palliative care skills of our community nurses, Aboriginal health workers and allied health professionals.

”Money will also be provided to non-government agencies for projects to be undertaken in collaboration with NT Palliative Care Services.

“These projects provide another snapshot of the detailed work we have already started to implement in Building Healthier Communities – our five year framework for Health and Community Services.”

Dr Toyne said the stand-alone Hospice will provide specialised care and support to Territorians with a terminal illness and their families.

“This project is part of fulfilling the NT Government’s commitment to broaden health service delivery to Territorians.”