Sue Carter
Shadow Minister for Health & Community Services, Senior Territorians, and Arts & Museums

Budget blow-out in Health
19 May 2004

The current 03-04 Department of Health and Community Services Budget has blown out $50 million the 2004-2005 Territory Budget has revealed.

Shadow Health and Community Services Minister Sue Carter said no explanation is given for the 9% Budget blow out.

“Last year the Government allocated $561 million to the Department. Now we see the Martin Government is estimating that by the end of the financial year the budget will have blown-out to $612 million, with no explanation,” she said.

Ms Carter said significantly the 2004-05 Budget does nothing to address the access block which sees patients waiting hours, if not days, for a proper bed in our major hospitals.

“Nor does it do anything to deal with the heavy work-loads the nurses in areas like Royal Darwin Hospital and the Palmerston Community Health Centre are facing,” Ms Carter said.

“Noticeably what the Budget does do is re-announces old promises of a hospice and expansion of the RDH accident and emergency department.

“However there is no mention of a previously promised oncology unit.

“Territorians will remember how the Minister for Health proclaimed last December when he became Minister: ‘I suppose it is the first time I've had a health problem’ and how accurate that premonition was – because he knew he would be unable to stop the Department's budget spiralling out of control’.

Ends