Health and Community Services Minister, Jane Aagaard, today announced plans to construct fifteen new 2 & 3 bedroom units for staff at the Alice Springs Hospital.

Mrs Aagaard said the units will be built on Government land which has been set aside on the western side of the old Alice Springs Gaol site.

The land will be sold by public Expression of Interest for the construction of a minimum of fifteen units, to be leased back to the Territory Government.

"This is a significant boost to clinical staff accommodation and reflects the Government’s commitment to the recruitment and retention of nurses and health professionals."

"This project will go a long way to addressing the shortage of accommodation for staff and their families as well as visiting students."

"At present the Alice Springs Hospital has thirty six units of accommodation, (excluding the 120 rooms with common facilities in the Dennison and Stafford Wings) with an occupancy rate of 100%.

"The mix of accommodation will include units which can be shared, units for families and units for students. Student accommodation is a particularly important part of our nurse recruitment strategy."

The chosen site is part of the heritage precinct of the old gaol and the new units will be constructed within the requirements of the Heritage Conservation Management Plan, already in place over the land.

Mrs Aagaard said the construction project will provide a substantial boost to the Alice Springs building industry. The call for expressions of interest is expected to be made before the end of September, 2002.