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New Mural Opens at Royal Darwin Hospital

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A new floor to ceiling mural, designed and painted by university art students, was today revealed at the Royal Darwin Hospital’s Joan Ridley Unit.

Family and Community Services Minister Marion Scrymgour said the mural – which features iconic Top End scenery – had been painted in the 10-bed secure facility with the help of mental health patients.

“Patients being treated at Joan Ridley are often acutely unwell and need to be treated in a low stimulus, safe and secure environment,” Ms Scrymgour said.

“This brilliant floor to ceiling mural features a serene image of a Top End billabong in calming colours which will improve the aesthetics of the area and provide a more pleasant environment for people using this facility.”

Ms Scrymgour said the mural was part of the Top End Mental Health Project, which started last year, to explore ways of extending the range and quality of mental health care options in the Top End.

The plan included implementation of short-term improvements to infrastructure in the inpatient unit.

“The mural was done by Charles Darwin University Art Lecturer Marina Baker, who has a 15-year history of painting murals and has embarked on several community projects in Victoria and most recently the Tiwi Islands,” Ms Scrymgour said.

“Marina and her students designed and constructed the new mural, with support from staff and assistance from mental health clients who also contributed to the project.”

Ms Scrymgour said the NT Government is committed to strengthening the mental health system in the Northern Territory, with an unprecedented funding injection of $12.7 million over three years announced last year.

“This will help to transform the Territory’s mental health system into one of the most progressive and productive in Australia,” Ms Scrymgour said. “It is also pleasing to see our Top End Mental Health Service recently reach accreditation for two years by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards.

“This accreditation process is consistent with the NT Government’s Building Healthier Communities Framework by enhancing quality and safety programs in all our care systems.”