Govt must explain its hospital failures

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Source: Jodeen Carney

Reports that the Alice Springs and Tennant Creek Hospitals are two of the nations top 26 worst hospitals (out of 640) is further proof that the Territory Labor Government has been compromising the safety of patients in the Barkly and Central Australia, Shadow Health Minister Jodeen Carney said today.

Ms Carney said the Government had been reckless and negligent by continually playing down the magnitude of the perilous state of hospital care available in the two regions.

The Australian Council of Healthcare Standards gave the two hospitals "a high priority rating (HPR), allocated when patient and/or staff care is compromised and there is no evidence of improvement in care since the previous assessment."

The assessments were based on a range of criteria which included "patient safety, infection control, quality of equipment and whether there was adequate staffing."

“What confidence can people attending these two hospitals have given this latest damning report,” Ms Carney said.

“What guarantees does the Health Minister intend to provide patients that these problems will be fixed within 60 days as is being prescribed? If people feel their safety is being put in jeopardy because of the poor rating will the Government now pay to fly these patients interstate?

“Importantly did Minister Toyne know that the two hospitals were among the worst 26 in Australia before the election.”

Ms Carney said the Government and Health Minister Toyne stand condemned for continually ignoring warnings from the Opposition, the Alice Springs Hospital staff and the Alice Springs and Tennant Creek communities.

“Now, a national accreditation body, the Australian Council of Healthcare Standards, has described Alice Springs and Tennant Creek hospitals as sub-standard - classified by national authorities as having failed to meet minimum accreditation standards.”

“The Health Minister must face Territorians and explain how he got it so wrong, what he intends to do to fix the problem and what is the time frame to fix it.”

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