Dr Chris Burns
MINISTER FOR HEALTH

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Federal Budget Must Deliver for NT Health

The Territory Government hopes tonight’s Federal Budget contains funding to tackle important health issues in the Territory.

The Health Minister Chris Burns said last week’s NT Budget contained a record $838 million for health – an increase of 73% since 2001.

“I would hope the Federal Government’s Budget demonstrates a similar level of commitment,” he said.

Dr Burns said there are three areas that could greatly benefit from an injection of Federal funding:

- an increase in GPs to the NT
- renal health
- increased resources for primary health care

“We estimate an extra 60 GPs are needed across the Territory – particularly in the Palmerston and rural areas. We also need improved access to after-hours and bulk-billing services. The NT has one of the lowest levels of bulk billing in Australia.

“An increase in this area will certainly take the burden off our hospital system.”

Dr Burns said last week’s NT Budget committed an extra $24.4 million over four years to tackle renal health issues.

“From this funding, the Territory will live up to its responsibility to provide dialysis treatment.

“The early detection and prevention of kidney disease through primary health care and increased capital facilities are something the Federal Government should take responsibility for, as this is not just a NT problem but one that affects all of northern and remote Australia.”

Dr Burns said the Federal Government must also increase resources for primary health care.
“Investments in this area over the past 10 years have led to improved health outcomes for Aboriginal people, especially women and children. This effort must continue and be expanded.”

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Moving the Territory Ahead