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Joint Press Release Dr Chris Burns & Tony Abbott

Builders and operators are sought for a new, world-class radiation oncology treatment facility in Darwin, following the issuing of tender documents today.

The tender takes Territorians one step closer to having access to world-class radiation oncology treatment, due to the joint efforts of the Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments.

About 450 Territorians are diagnosed with cancer each year. The new clinic will make it easier for them to receive prompt, effective treatment locally – rather than having to travel interstate.

Radiation therapy, which can be life-saving, involves using high-energy rays to damage cancer cells, stopping them from growing and dividing.

The Commonwealth and Territory Government’s have each committed substantial resources to the project. Between us, we will provide substantial support for the costs of buildings, equipment and land.

The Commonwealth Government has committed $13 million towards the construction of the facility through the 2006-07 Better Access to Radiation Oncology federal Budget measure and will provide recurrent support through Medicare and Health Program Grants for professional services and costs of equipment. In total the Commonwealth will spend over $30 million to support this service over the next 10 years.

The Northern Territory Government:

- will provide the land on the RDH Campus on which the Unit could be built;
- is committed to providing funding for allied health and community nursing staff to support this service
- is working on developing accommodation options for cancer patients and their families coming to Darwin.

Work on the facility is expected to begin later this year.

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