Royal Darwin Hospital will receive a record $315 million in funding this year which will see major upgrades undertaken in one of Australia’s busiest hospitals, Chief Minister Paul Henderson said today.

Budget 2011 also delivers increased funding to support the Territory’s record number of doctors and nurses. Today there are 208 more doctors and 677 more nurses compared to 2002.

“The Northern Territory Labor Government has increased spending to the Royal Darwin Hospital by a massive 181% since 2001,” Mr Henderson said.

“Once again the NT Labor Government is increasing the Royal Darwin Hospital budget – up $22 million on last year - to ensure we meet the increasing demands for acute health services by delivering better hospital infrastructure.”

Mr Henderson said more than $143.5 million will be spent upgrading all hospitals across the Northern Territory, with $41.5 million for continuing works to upgrade the emergency stand-by power generator at RDH.

Mr Henderson said the NT Government in partnership with the Federal Government will deliver more than $9 million worth of upgrades to the Emergency Department and Operating Theatres.

These upgrades will provide extra operating theatre capacity and increase the number of beds in the Short Stay Unit.

Mr Henderson added that a new three year NT Public Sector Medical Officers Enterprise Agreement will provide a competitive remuneration package for doctors.

“We now have more doctors and nurses working in the Territory than ever before,” Mr Henderson said.

“But the NT Government is spending more money to keep our doctors amongst the best paid in the country and make sure they stay here in the Territory,’ he said.

“Recruitment and retention of medical officers is a major issue nationally – more so for remote areas – so we are absolutely committed to making sure we can offer the most competitive package we can.”

Contact: Lidija Ivanovski 0457 933 856