John Elferink
Minister for Health

**Investing in a healthier Northern Territory**

28 April 2015

The Northern Territory Government is heavily investing in the health system in Budget 2015, ensuring that Territorians receive quality healthcare to lead healthier lives.

Budget 2015 delivers $1.42 billion in total health-related spending, up from $1.35 billion last year.

Minister for Health John Elferink said infrastructure improvements have been a major focus, with upgrades planned for both the Royal Darwin Hospital (RDH) and the Alice Springs Hospital (AHS).

“RDH will receive a new lease on life with $40 million to be spent on staged upgrades to the entrance, foyer, courtyard, outpatients’ clinic, allied health, a new eye clinic and public access areas. The air conditioning system will also be upgraded,” Mr Elferink said.

“The paediatric ward at RDH will also receive a makeover to the tune of more than $15 million, creating a more comfortable space for unwell children and their families.”

Funding of $7.6 million has been allocated to relocate the Ambulance Centre in Katherine out of the flood zone.

Additionally, $500 000 has been set aside for a scoping study for a standalone ambulatory care facility at RDH.

Upgrades worth more than $34 million will continue at ASH, including remediation and fire rectification works, and a new teaching and training facility.

A $7.9 million grant will be directed towards the construction of a purpose built Alcohol Mandatory Treatment facility and for the expansion of treatment services.

Mr Elferink said tackling alcohol abuse and alcohol–related violence is high on this Government’s agenda. Alcohol Mandatory Treatment is just one policy in a suite of highly effective initiatives to bring down alcohol-related crime, including domestic violence, in the community.

Headworks at the site of the Palmerston Regional Hospital are already underway, and major construction works is expected to begin later this year.

In Budget 2015, more than $17 million is being invested in equipment, technology and system upgrades. “These upgrades will simplify the way healthcare is delivered and enhance patients’ experience with the health system,” Mr Elferink said.
Mental health services in the Northern Territory will receive a boost with funding of $3 million going towards providing increased support services for mental health patients and their families. Funding will also be directed towards youth assistance and providing help to those at risk of developing a mental illness.

Popular health programs such as the Hospital in the Home service and Midwifery Group Practice will continue to receive funding for expanded services.

“The Country Liberals Government also recognises that Indigenous people are pivotal to the success of health care in remote areas of the Northern Territory. This is why the Government is committing $1.17 million to boost the number of Indigenous health practitioners in the workforce and more than $900 000 to create a framework that supports Aboriginal community control in health care services,” Mr Elferink said.

“Quality health care and a smarter system will contribute to a healthier Territory population.

“Health staff are passionate and driven to achieve better outcomes for their patients and clients, and so too is the Northern Territory Government.”

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