$10M FIX FOR ALICE SPRINGS HOSPITAL

The Northern Territory Government will spend $10 million to rectify fire and safety defects at Alice Springs Hospital.

Minister for Health Dr Peter Toyne announced the massive injection of funds following a comprehensive review of the redevelopment building works, which began in 1998.

“I flagged the problems at Alice Springs Hospital last year and a detailed examination has revealed they are even more serious than first thought.

“I’m unhappy with what has been found and I will fix it.

“This Government has committed an additional $8 million on top of the $2 million allocated last year to ensure the problems are fixed as quickly as possible.

“I am determined to minimise the impact on the people of Alice Springs and everything will be done to reduce disruption to staff and patients at the hospital.

Dr Toyne said a detailed program of works has been developed, which will see wards temporarily relocated while the remedial works are carried out.

“I must stress the hospital is safe and the high standards we have grown to expect at Alice Springs Hospital will not only been maintained but improved.

“Cabinet has instructed me to pursue all legal remedies against all parties shown to be responsible for this situation.

“The $11 million dollars allocated in last year’s budget to improve the Intensive Care Unit / High Dependency Unit will continue to fund the work being done to enhance the capacity of Alice Springs Hospital.

“This is all about moving the Territory ahead, providing the best possible health care for all Territorians.

“Many of the building blocks are already in place, including an extra 100 nurses in the Territory health system.,” Dr Toyne said.
Background

- Original contracts were let in 1998 as a planning, design, document, construct and commission project i.e. the winning contractor was responsible for delivery of the entire project, including certification.

- Building starts in 1998 – finishes in 2002

- A comprehensive Compliance Audit commissioned in December 2003 after a number of defects emerged.

- A number of fire/safety defects in the redevelopment works were identified from this audit.

- Major building rectification issues include fire safety, the failure of the redevelopment to meet Building Code of Australia standards, and air conditioning.

- Written confirmation from the Fire Department that the occupants of the hospital are safe.

- Government approved $2 million in May 2004 towards the cost of rectifications.

- Detailed examination of Alice Springs Hospital reveals more problems – an extra $8 million committed by NT Government.

- Work will start shortly - the planned order is: operating theatres/day procedure units, paediatrics, ICU and Maternity/Special Care Nursery followed by surgical wards and medical wards east and west.

- No wards will close – they will be relocated while the defects are rectified.

- Work could be completed by the end of 2007.

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