Trip Provides Cancer Support Options

The Territory Health Minister Chris Burns said his visit a number of cancer accommodation facilities in Adelaide has been productive and informative.

The trip is providing the Minister with a better understanding of the types of accommodation available for cancer sufferers who are being treated in Adelaide but live outside the city.

The visits will help determine the type of accommodation that will be developed as part of the Territory Government’s commitment to a Radiation Oncology Unit at Royal Darwin Hospital.

Dr Burns has been joined on the trip by representatives from the Cancer Council NT and Bosom Buddles.

“Being diagnosed with a life-threatening disease like cancer and then having weeks and sometimes months of treatment can take its toll on a patient and their family,” Dr Burns said.

“Ensuring cancer sufferers from outside Darwin have appropriate and comfortable accommodation and strong support services while being treated at the new Radiation Oncology Unit will be essential.

“The types of accommodation that we’ve seen in Adelaide provide maximum emotional support but also greatly reduce any financial burden to the patient and their family.

“I’ve been able to look at a range of accommodation facilities from motels and self-contained units to hostels and a Ronald McDonald House.

“Most of the accommodation places also offer other support services such as counselling, transport, help with grocery shopping and food services.

“The visits have given me a lot to consider in planning for accommodation to be attached to the Radiation Oncology Unit.”

The Federal Government has gone to a select tender process to identify an interstate service provider to build and operate the unit.

The Territory Government has committed to:

- Providing accommodation options for cancer patients and their families who travel to Darwin for treatment.
- Providing the land for the unit in the grounds of Royal Darwin Hospital
- Providing funding for allied health and community nursing staff and other costs to support the service

The Radiation Oncology Unit is expected to be operational by 2009.

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