

**Dr PETER TOYNE
MINISTER FOR HEALTH**

3 May 2005

BUILDING A HEALTHIER TERRITORY

The Territory Government has lifted spending on Health by 43% since 2001-02 to provide better health services, Minister for Health Dr Peter Toyne announced today.

Dr Toyne said under Budget 2005, Health and Community Services spending is now a record \$687 million.

BACKING HOSPITALS

Budget 2005 includes record spending to support our hospitals:

- Alice Springs Hospital funding has been boosted to \$81.2 million in Budget 2005
- Royal Darwin Hospital funding has been boosted to \$156.4 million

In Budget 2005, Tennant Creek Hospital will receive \$8.1 million; Katherine Hospital \$20.3 million; and Gove District Hospital \$15.7 million.

BETTER HEALTH SERVICES

Budget 2005 includes a range of initiatives to improve health services to Territorians.

Highlights include:

- \$1.9 million extra ongoing for Alice Springs Hospital for improved medical staffing levels in the Intensive Care Unit and Emergency Department
- \$1.9 million to operate the Royal Darwin Hospital 12-bed hospice
- \$500,000 a year to improve care and support services for Territorians needing interstate radiotherapy treatment
- extra \$2 million for renal services closer to patients' homes, with a further \$2.4 million in capital spending for renal services
- \$500,000 for new NT Health Direct service providing a free 24 hour a day medical advice phone line
- an extra \$1.5 million a year ongoing for mental health services, including \$200,000 for better 24-hour emergency response and \$350,000 to establish four additional child and adolescent psychiatrist positions in rural centres
- an extra \$600,000 a year for community-based residential mental health care services in Darwin and Alice Springs
- \$250,000 a year for suicide prevention work in regional and remote communities
- \$900,000 for computing equipment in all remote clinics
- continuing funding for employment of 100 extra nurses in our system

BACKING THE COMMUNITY SECTOR

Budget 2005 delivers significant funding boosts to health and community services Non-Government Organisations.

They will receive grant indexation to meet the real costs of providing these important services to our community.

This means an increase in grant payments of \$1.13 million in Budget 2005, increasing by a further \$500,000 each year ongoing.

BACKING FAMILIES

Budget 2005 backs Territory families with:

- \$3.7 million to subsidise childcare – making childcare cheaper
- \$2.5 million for a Birthing Centre at Royal Darwin Hospital and \$300,000 for staff training
- \$400,000 for extra home birth and maternity services
- \$200,000 a year for nurses to study locally as midwives
- \$500,000 for an intensive family support service
- \$340,000 to enhance services for people with chronic pain
- \$600,000 extra for oral health equipment and services
- an extra \$1 million for services for high-need children in care
- \$300,000 to support seven new remote youth services
- \$500,000 to employ Indigenous cadets, foster care support workers and new community resource staff to work in remote communities
- an extra \$430,000 for the Nhulunbuy Special Care Centre and \$390,000 contributed towards a 12-bed sobering up facility in Nhulunbuy
- \$8.1 million to support Territory Seniors and the Pensioner Concession Scheme

BETTER INFRASTRUCTURE

Better health services across the Territory will be backed with a strong investment in health infrastructure in Budget 2005. Health capital works is a total \$33.2 million, with \$8.3 million for repairs and maintenance.

Highlights include:

- \$9.27 million for Alice Springs Hospital fire safety upgrades
- \$650,000 to upgrade health staff accommodation in Alice Springs
- \$380,000 to complete other Central Australian health centres
- \$1 million each to upgrade Flynn Drive and Alice Springs Hospital renal facilities, providing additional renal stations and services for acute patients
- \$1.2 million for community-based residential facilities in Darwin and Alice Springs for 24-hour support for people with mental illness

“The Martin Government is continuing to back Territory families with funding boosts and better access to important health services,” Dr Toyne said.

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