

## Strengthening the Patient Assistance Travel Scheme

a Northern Territory Government Initiative - commencing 1 July 2008

Northern Territory Health Minister Dr Chris Burns recently announced a major investment of \$2 million to strengthen the Patient Assistance Travel Scheme (PATS) and support Territorians living in rural and remote regions who require specialist health services, as part of Budget 2008/09 initiatives.

### New Improved Service

The Patient Assistance Travel Scheme assists Northern Territory residents to access a range of essential specialist medical / surgical services where services are not available locally from within the Northern Territory or from a visiting service. PATS provides assistance with travel, and if applicable, accommodation costs to residents of the Northern Territory who are required to travel more than 200kms to the nearest specialist medical treatment.

From the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008 the Patient Assistance Travel Scheme eligibility criteria will be enhanced to include:

- An escort for every patient travelling interstate for surgery or intensive therapies e.g. radiation therapies, non surgical cancer treatments, cardiology and neurosurgery,
- A ground transport reimbursement of \$40 per return trip for patients who are required to travel interstate for treatment,
- An increase to the commercial accommodation rate from \$33 a night to \$35 a night – making the Territory's scheme equal top among Australian jurisdictions,
- An increase to the Private Vehicle allowance to allow a claim of 15 cents per kilometre for up to 3 patients travelling together,
- A new support and coordination officer in Adelaide to support Territory patients travelling to Adelaide for treatment,
- New support and coordination positions at the Royal Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Gove Hospitals,

Peter Campos  
Assistant Secretary, Acute Care  
1 July 2008

### PATS Office Contacts

Darwin District	Katherine District	Gove District	Barkly District	Alice Springs District
Royal Darwin Hospital	Katherine Hospital	Gove Hospital	Tennant Creek Hospital	Alice Springs Hospital
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