



ANTHONY ALBANESE
PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

ANTHONY ALBANESE MP
PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA

NATASHA FYLES MLA
CHIEF MINISTER OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

MARK BUTLER MP
MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE

***** STRICTLY UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 5PM AEST MONDAY, 1 MAY 2023 *****

MEDICARE URGENT CARE CLINICS AND NEW CANCER TREATMENT FOR THE NT

The Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments will establish two new Medicare Urgent Care Clinics (UCCs) in Palmerston and Alice Springs.

The Northern Territory Government is in advanced stages of negotiations with the Palmerston GP Super Clinic to deliver the Urgent Care Clinic in Darwin and with Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (CAAC) to deliver the Urgent Care Clinic in Alice Springs.

These UCCs will provide bulk billed treatment for urgent but non-life-threatening emergencies. They will be open extended hours, seven days a week.

The UCCs will reduce demand pressures on the Territory's public hospitals and planning is underway in partnership with local primary health providers.

They will:

- Improve access to urgent care in non-hospital settings, particularly for vulnerable groups including people with a disability, First Nations people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- Reduce the pressure on emergency department presentations in partner hospitals by providing patients with short term, episodic care for urgent conditions that are not immediately life-threatening.
- Support integration with existing local health services and complement general practice.

These clinics will be up and running providing urgent care to the local communities by the middle of the year.

Category 4 and 5 presentations, non-life-threatening emergencies, make up just over 40 per cent of the total presentations to hospitals in the Northern Territory.

Providing care closer to home is a priority of both the Australian and Territory Governments.

Today, the Prime Minister and Chief Minister officially opened the jointly funded \$27 million cyclotron facility at the Royal Darwin Hospital (RDH) campus, which is now operational, producing radioisotopes used in the Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scanner for cancer and other scans.

This means that for the first time, radioisotopes are now produced locally in the Territory.

Local production has enabled faster diagnosis and treatment, leading to better outcomes for patients. It also means fewer Territorians have to travel interstate for scans.

The cyclotron has increased the capacity of the RDH PET service, enabling an additional five patients per day to access scans.

Around 800 Territorians are diagnosed with cancer each year. The cyclotron will help improve cancer care services, so treatment is delivered in the best way possible for each patient.

The cyclotron is one of the most powerful of its kind in Australia, ensuring the facility is future-proofed to meet any increases in demand for PET scanner services in the Territory.

The cyclotron will also be able to provide additional types of radiopharmaceuticals in the future, which may create access to new scans and treatments not currently available in the NT.

Quotes attributable to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese:

“The Australian Government is establishing more than 50 Medicare Urgent Care clinics across Australia to increase access to care and reduce pressure on our already overburdened hospitals.

“Providing accessible and affordable healthcare for all Australians is important to this government. These two new urgent care clinics will provide Territorians with more healthcare options, and provide reprieve for our hardworking health staff.

“The Federal Government is proud to join the Northern Territory Government in officially opening the Cyclotron today, which will have an impact on many Territorians lives, and provide more healthcare closer to home.”

Quotes attributable to Chief Minister Natasha Fyles:

“The Territory Government is focused on reducing pressure on our health system. Our 2023 Budget allocates \$20 million into the established of a new 32-bed ward which will also assist on the demand pressure Royal Darwin Hospital is facing.

“Urgent Care Clinics will be established in Alice Springs and Palmerston. They will provide more options for patients and support our hardworking health staff.

“I am proud that together with the Federal Government we have increased access to PET scans for Territorians, thanks to the construction of the cyclotron.”

Quotes attributable to the Minister for Health, Mark Butler:

“The Government’s Medicare Urgent Care Clinics will allow families in the Northern Territory to get top-quality care from a nurse or a doctor without having to wait in a hospital emergency department.

“Just over 40 per cent of all presentations to emergency departments in the NT are for non-life-threatening conditions, and that’s where Medicare UCCs will be so valuable.

“Medicare UCCs are just one way the Albanese Government is strengthening Medicare and ensuring Territorians get the medical care they need when they need it.”

MONDAY, 1 MAY 2023

***** STRICTLY UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 5PM AEST MONDAY, 1 MAY 2023 *****

Media Contact:

Prime Minister's Office: 02 6277 7744 | Media@pm.gov.au