Health Minister, Robyn Lambley, has praised the work of the Northern Territory’s palliative care teams for their commitment to supporting patients who are nearing the end of their lives.

There are two palliative care units in the Territory – in Darwin and Alice Springs – which support health care providers in the delivery of end-of-life care.

The Government provides approximately $8.5 million for palliative services including physician support for community health and primary medical providers, a hospice facility for care in the final stage of illness, bereavement care, and support and training for the many volunteers who help families in the home, in the hospice and during bereavement.

Each year dozens of patients receive targeted treatments as well as comfort and support from Territory health care providers during their final weeks of life.

To mark Palliative Care Week, Mrs Lambley committed the Government to providing high quality palliative care for all Territorians.

“At some point every Australian will have an involvement with palliative care, either as a patient, carer, family member, neighbour or friend,” Mrs Lambley said.

“It can be a deeply distressing time for all involved and it is reassuring patients are receiving the best care and support possible.

“As well as the Hospice at the Royal Darwin Hospital campus, a suburban home is currently being fitted-out in Alice Springs through a Territory-Commonwealth National Partnership Agreement to provide day care for palliative patients.

“The four-bedroom, two-bathroom centre in Araluen is being fitted-out to allow wheelchair and equipment access and will enable families and carers to take a break from their demanding roles at home during the day.

“It will support patients with medications, symptom management, personal care and social support.

“The palliative care team from Alice Springs Hospital will visit patients and families at the house during the day.”

Health care providers in the Territory are able to develop their skills through involvement in the Program of Experience in the Palliative Approach (PEPA), to learn about palliative care services.

The Department of Health and Territory Palliative Care recently hosted a forum in Alice Springs focussing on end stage care for people with chronic disease.

A Chronic Disease Palliative Care resource will be available on Territory Palliative Care’s website from July.

**Media Contact:**
Camden Smith 0488 588 754