APA calls on Northern Territory leaders to upgrade vital physiotherapy facilities

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The President of the Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) has called on leaders in the Northern Territory to take urgent action on the vastly insufficient physiotherapy facilities at the Royal Darwin Hospital.

The current outpatient physiotherapy space is only big enough for two treatment bays, with limited privacy and no space for essential gymnasium equipment. All inpatients receive physiotherapy at the bedside or in busy ward corridors.

“Physiotherapy has a huge impact on acute care; it’s a service that allows patients to achieve optimal recovery from severe trauma, brain injuries, and many other serious conditions,” Ms Locke said. “This situation has existed for the past decade and prevents Royal Darwin Hospital from providing optimal care to the more than 150 thousand people it services”.

As the peak body for physiotherapy in Australia, the APA first called on the Northern Territory Government for improved facilities in 2011; and in October that year Minister for Health Konstantine Vatskalis committed to an enhanced treatment area, an integrated gymnasium and additional storage space for physiotherapists at the hospital.

However, these upgrades were not funded in this year’s Northern Territory Budget.

“The Northern Territory Government and Opposition must make this a priority. Royal Darwin Hospital is purporting to be a hospital of great standards and therefore quality care is paramount. Any other tertiary public hospital I have visited in Australia has a gymnasium and adequate safe space for inpatients to be treated. It’s simply not good enough that Territorians are not able to receive the health care they deserve,” Ms Locke said.

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