

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Yan to the Minister for Health:

Chronic Conditions

- 1. How many Territorians have been diagnosed with a chronic condition this year? Please include a breakdown by cardiovascular disease, rheumatic heart disease, chronic airways disease, chronic kidney disease, chronic mental illness, and cancers associated with common risk factors for other chronic conditions.**

Data concerning the number of Territorians diagnosed with a chronic condition this year is not available. To have a comprehensive picture of the burden, good coverage primary health care data is needed. With no access to GP data or Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation data and also in the absence of a population survey, NT Health does not have a full picture of the chronic disease burden.

NT Health uses multiple available data sources and statistical modelling to estimate the number of chronic disease and therefore there is a time gap. The latest and most accurate data is from 2019; however, these statistics are from recent unpublished research and have not gone through final validation, therefore, they are not currently available for circulation.

- 2. Can you provide an estimate the burden of chronic conditions has on the NT Health system? Either in terms of health-related costs, beds in hospitals, staff hours, or any other measure?**

NT Department of Health is currently undertaking the fourth Burden of Disease Study for the period between 2014 and 2018. Once complete, data will be available to estimate of the burden of chronic conditions, using the measure of Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALY). However at this time, the unpublished research has not gone through final validation, therefore is not available for circulation.

- 3. How much of the NT Health budget is allocated to address chronic conditions specifically?**

Chronic Disease Conditions are a significant contributor to the cost of health services in the NT. Across Australia in the 2019-20 financial year, \$38 billion of the \$202 billion ([2019-20 Summary | AIHW](#)) in health expenditure was for Chronic Diseases, or approximately 19% of the total health expenditure.

Previous studies have shown that the Burden of Chronic Disease in the NT is 1.7 to 1.9 times higher than across the rest of Australia. Extrapolating this out results in an estimate of 34% of the NT Health budget being spent on the management

and treatment for Chronic Disease conditions, which for the 2021-22 financial year is an approximation of \$700 million.

Note that this methodology has been used as the budget items and expenditure are not specifically linked to Chronic Conditions. As an example, a patient may require treatment for their chronic conditions while recuperating in hospital following elective surgery but the treatment of the chronic conditions is not the primary reason for being in hospital.