



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

No. 33

WRITTEN QUESTION

Ms Uibo to the Minister for Health:

Doctor and Nurse Positions

1. How many doctors in the Northern Territory are currently on temporary contracts at Royal Darwin Hospital, Palmerston Regional Hospital, Alice Springs Hospital, Gove District Hospital, Tennant Creek Hospital and Katherine Hospital? How many are on permanent contracts?

Hospital	Permanent	Temporary/ contract	Casual	Total
Alice Springs Hospital	6	206		212
Gove Hospital		41		41
Katherine Hospital		36		36
Palmerston Regional Hospital		74		74
Royal Darwin Hospital		535	10	545
Tennant Creek Hospital		22		26
Total	6	914	10	934

Data as at 15 January 2025

2. How many nurses in the Northern Territory are currently on temporary contracts at Royal Darwin Hospital, Palmerston Regional Hospital, Alice Springs Hospital, Gove District Hospital, Tennant Creek Hospital and Katherine Hospital? How many are on permanent contracts?

Hospital	Permanent	Temporary/ contract	Casual	Total
Alice Springs Hospital	450	101	48	599
Gove Hospital	59	22	5	86
Katherine Hospital	70	18	10	98
Palmerston Regional Hospital	197	23		220
Royal Darwin Hospital	1,175	206	130	1,511
Tennant Creek Hospital	32	14	2	48
Total	1983	384	195	2,562

Data as at 15 January 2025

3. How many doctor positions are currently vacant at Royal Darwin Hospital, Palmerston Regional Hospital, Alice Springs Hospital, Gove District Hospital, Tennant Creek Hospital and Katherine Hospital? How long have they been vacant?

Hospital	Current Pay Vacancy (FTE)	Current Pay Vacancy %
Alice Springs Hospital	27	16%
Gove Hospital (1)		
Katherine Hospital	11	31%
Palmerston Regional Hospital	6	22%
Royal Darwin Hospital	50	9%
Tennant Creek Hospital (1)		
Total	94	

Data as at 15 January 2025

(1) There are no vacancies in Gove and Tennant Creek Hospitals

Determining how long positions have been vacant would require significant investigation and too administratively onerous.

4. How many nurse positions are currently vacant at Royal Darwin Hospital, Palmerston Regional Hospital, Alice Springs Hospital, Gove District Hospital, Tennant Creek Hospital and Katherine Hospital? How long have they been vacant?

Hospital	Current Pay Vacancy (FTE)	Current Pay Vacancy %
Alice Springs Hospital	90	17%
Gove Hospital	2	3%
Katherine Hospital	21	19%
Palmerston Regional Hospital	51	19%
Royal Darwin Hospital	120	8%
Tennant Creek Hospital	13	31%
Total	297	12%

Data as at 15 January 2025

Determining how long positions have been vacant would require significant investigation and too administratively onerous.

Note: above figures do not include agency labour hire which is used to supplement workforce requirements. FTE is based on 38-hour week. Headcount is based on individuals paid during pay period 15 regardless of hours worked. Difference between FTE and headcount occurs where staff work less than a fulltime equivalent such as part-time or casual.

5. How many locum doctor placements have occurred in Northern Territory hospitals in the past three months? What was the total cost of these, including salary, transport, accommodation, and any other costs?

Locum doctors (incl. Visiting Medical Officer)

	Oct	Nov	Dec
FTE	88	64	54

Description	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Wages	4,882,169	3,308,993	2,931,873	11,123,035
Agency fees	213,950	418,682	224,574	857,206
Travel expenses	258,110	297,316	115,196	670,622
Accommodation	263,714	392,899	142,048	798,661
Other expenses	97,870	104,423	67,824	270,117
Total	5,715,813	4,522,313	3,481,515	13,719,641

Nursing agency

	Oct	Nov	Dec
FTE	153	142	128

Description	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Wages	3,502,798	3,305,757	2,974,976	9,783,531
Agency fees	35,445		1,108	36,553
Travel expenses	27,081	42,599	54,804	124,484
Accommodation	27,811	26,927	106,050	160,788
Other expenses	5,817	3,341	5,549	14,707
Total	3,598,952	3,378,624	3,142,487	10,120,063

Further Information

- NT Health is implementing a range of strategies to minimise nursing/midwifery agency and medical locum utilisation including:
 - established NT Health wide processes for casual nursing/midwifery workforce in lieu of agency in recognition of the changed workforce profile and employment expectations;
 - procuring a specialist recruitment provider to assist with sourcing skilled and qualified nurses and midwives;
 - strengthened relocation support for international and domestic nursing/midwifery recruits; and
 - establishing NT Health wide business rules for engaging medical locums.
- All actions require implementation time to realise full potential and financial impact. It is likely nursing/midwifery agency and medical locum utilisation increases in certain periods due to seasonality and planned leave arrangements to support our hardworking and dedicated workforce.