



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

No. 226

WRITTEN QUESTION

J Davis to the Minister for Health, Hon Steven Edgington MLA:

Palmerston Regional Hospital hydrotherapy pool

1. Usage and Access

- a. On how many days per week is the Palmerston Regional Hospital hydrotherapy pool currently in operation?
- b. What are the daily hours of operation, and how many sessions are conducted per day?
- c. How many patients, on average, access the pool each week?
- d. What is the maximum number of users permitted in the pool at any one time?
- e. Please provide a monthly breakdown of usage from February 2025, including how many sessions and length of time.

2. Eligibility and Referral Process

- a. What are the current eligibility criteria for access to the hydrotherapy pool?
- b. Are patients able to access the pool with their own private physiotherapist? If not, what is the rationale?
- c. How many referrals have been received, accepted, declined, or lost since 1 November 2025?
- d. What steps has the Department taken to address reported issues with lost referrals and delays in access?

3. Changes to Access Arrangements

- a. When and why were changes made to restrict access for private physiotherapists and community organisations?
- b. What consultation was undertaken with patients, community organisations, and clinicians prior to these changes?
- c. Can the Minister provide details of all stakeholders consulted and the consultation process?

4. Purpose and Design of the Facility

- a. Was the Palmerston Regional Hospital hydrotherapy pool originally intended to be used by private physiotherapists and community groups, in addition to hospital patients?
- b. If so, when and why did this policy position change?

5. Alternative Hydrotherapy Access

- a. What assessment has the Department undertaken of alternative hydrotherapy facilities available in Darwin?

- b. Does the Department consider the SWELL Palmerston pool to be a suitable substitute for clinical hydrotherapy? If so, on what basis?
- c. What consideration has been given to cost barriers, accessibility, and clinical suitability of alternative facilities?

6. Staffing and Resourcing

- a. Is there currently a dedicated aquatic physiotherapist position at Palmerston Regional Hospital?
- b. If vacant, how long has the position been unfilled and what steps are being taken to recruit to this role?
- c. What staffing constraints are impacting the operation and accessibility of the hydrotherapy pool?

7. Future Management and Model of Care

- a. Has the Government made a decision on who will manage the hydrotherapy pool into the future?
- b. Is outsourcing of the pool's operations under active consideration?
- c. What is the timeline for finalising the Aquatic Physiotherapy Service Guideline and Model of Care?

8. Consultation on Guidelines

- a. Who has been consulted in the development of the Aquatic Physiotherapy Service Guideline and Model of Care? Please provide details of the consultation process
- b. Why has the guideline not been publicly released for broader consultation, including with consumers and community stakeholders?
- c. Will the Minister commit to releasing the draft guideline for public consultation?

9. Cultural Safety and Equity

- a. How are diverse cultural needs taken into account in accessing hydrotherapy services?
- b. How is the Department ensuring equitable access for pensioners and low-income patients who cannot afford private alternatives?

10. Health and Economic Impacts

- a. Has there been a cost benefit analysis potential cost savings associated with increased access to hydrotherapy, including reduced hospital admissions or delayed entry into residential care?
- b. If so, will the Minister table this analysis?