



**Australian Medical Association
Northern Territory**

Lack of Junior Doctors Risks Patients Lives at RDH

The Australian Medical Association Northern Territory is extremely concerned for patient safety because of an apparent lack of junior doctors at Royal Darwin Hospital.

The AMA President, Dr Peter Beaumont said today that the AMA had been asked to assist with two serious patient safety issues in the past two weeks. "Last week we got a plea for help from an exhausted young doctor who was rightly concerned for her patients because she had been required to work almost 100 hours overtime in the prior five weeks" Dr Beaumont said.

The AMA is aware that this is not an isolated case.

"Then this week, surgeons have advised us that the hospital is being staffed overnight with only one junior doctor covering all the medical and surgical patients and if that doctor is required in the operating theatre to assist, the hospital is left with no-one on the floor for those patients".

It is established safe practice to have two doctors so there is always cover. "I raised the overtime problem with the Minister last week and he said he would fix it" Dr Beaumont said.

The AMA is concerned that there are endemic problems in the system and while it is good that the Minister acted swiftly, we cannot have the Minister running the hospital system and it is appropriate that the public knows that something has to be done to ensure we have sufficient unstressed doctors to guarantee safe treatment at all times.

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