



Local kidney transplant patient Lachlan Ross spent four years on dialysis

# Feds unveil review of kidney process

JASON WALLS

THE Federal Government is poised to announce an inquiry into indigenous access to kidney transplants in response to accusations of “systemic bias” in the health system.

Indigenous Health Minister Ken Wyatt will today unveil “a comprehensive review into the hurdles, service gaps and practical challenges” that prevent indigenous Australians from accessing transplants.

The announcement follows national outcry over revelations indigenous people are 85 per cent less likely to receive transplants than their non-indigenous neighbours, first published by the *NT News* last year. The alarming statistic

**“That’s much better than we’ve done in the past”**

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was initially raised by leading Darwin kidney specialist, Paul Lawton, who welcomed today’s announcement as a long overdue but significant step in the right direction.

“It’s pleasing that we’re actually taking this step after talking about it for years,” he said. “We need to get patients, transplant experts and com-

munity members together to actually plan this road map so that’s much better than we’ve done in the past.”

Mr Wyatt said \$250,000 in Commonwealth funding would allow the Transplantation Society of Australia and New Zealand to help inform development of a national framework to address the issue.

“I have heard many moving stories of the trauma and heartache caused by renal disease, including in my own family,” he said.

“This review aims to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander transplant rates, reduce the burden of regular dialysis and give more First Nations people the chance to

live fulfilling lives on country and in their communities.”

Darwin resident Lachlan Ross spent four years on dialysis before receiving a new kidney in 2014.

He said better access to transplants would make it easier for Aboriginal people to stay on country.

“For someone like me having (dialysis) for four years it was like just staying closer to Darwin really, living here and making sure that everything’s OK,” he said.

“Out bush you’re on your own, no support there.”

The Government hopes a long-term strategy will be ready for consideration by the Council of Australian Governments next year.