



# No bulk billing for new clinic

By DAMIEN MCCARTNEY

A NEW superclinic proposed for Darwin's northern suburbs may not offer bulk billing, a public meeting held this week revealed.

Health Minister Kon Vatskalis confirmed last night there was no guarantee the clinic would offer a bulk-billing service. "The Commonwealth gives preference to applicants that can provide bulk-billing but it is not essential," he said.

"The Palmerston superclinic is operated by FCD Health, a partnership of Flin-

ders University & CDU. They have implemented a payment schedule that provides affordable health care, with bulk billing to those who need it most."

Mr Vatskalis said those who needed it most included families with children under 16, and all health and concession card holders.

He said other clients may also be bulk billed at the discretion of clinicians.

"All patients treated at the Urgent Care After Hours service receive the treatment

at no charge," he said.

Director of GP Superclinics within the Department of Health and Ageing Anne Thorpe said there are clinics within the country that are struggling. "Some other clinics are finding it challenging providing the services they were set up to deliver," she said.

"We've got clinics that are struggling. The patients who are walking in the door are not the sort of patients who have the sort of chronic disease they think they should

## HE SAID IT



KON Vatskalis  
Health  
Minister  
Northern Territory

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be focused on.

"They have to be thinking, what have do we have to do to get the patients in here who need the sort of services that we were actually set up to deliver?"

In a video presentation put together by Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon, she said the clinics would not be run by the Commonwealth. "They will be entirely owned and operated privately."