



National Breaking News

Dog bite victim 'kept waiting 10 hours'

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CLAIMS a young girl had to wait more than 10 hours for surgery after a vicious dog attack warrant immediate investigation, the Northern Territory's Country Liberals say.

The eight-year-old needed stitches and staples to her face, and the puncture wounds cleaned, after the mauling by a mastiff-cross in the Darwin suburb of Tiwi.

Amanda Tipiloura said her daughter arrived at Royal Darwin Hospital (RDH) at 5pm (CST) yesterday and claims doctors did not treat the child until 3am today.

"We were told that she was supposed to have it done last night," Ms Tipiloura told ABC radio in Darwin.

"But she (was) still waiting because there were three people on the waiting list on top of her ...

"She should have been first before them but they put the appendicitis people first."

Country Liberals health spokesman Matt Conlan called on the Northern Territory Government to investigate all the circumstances surrounding the long wait.

"Ten hours is too long for an eight-year-old girl to be kept waiting for surgery," he said.

"We need to know what level of priority the girl was classified as when she presented to emergency, and whether she was seen within the requisite time frame."

Mr Conlan said an RDH report for 2006/07 found that only 27 per cent of patients needing urgent treatment were seen within the required time.

"The minister needs to find out whether the young girl was one of the 73 per cent of presentations at RDH emergency not seen within the required timeframe," he said.

RDH general manager Len Notaras said the girl's operation was booked for 11pm because she needed time to fast.

It was then bumped back because of two "life-threatening" emergency cases, he said.

"That had a priority," he said.

Dr Notaras said the girl was recovering well from her operation and her health was never risked in any way.

A hospital spokesperson later said the girl underwent surgery at 3.27am, but prior to that she'd

been seen by emergency department staff who had given her wounds an initial clean.