

Victims 'severely burned'



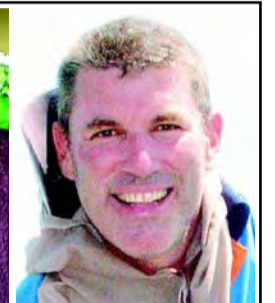
KALISTENI "Kelly" Ioannau
Currently in the RDH Burns Unit



PATRICK Dunks
29, Darwin City
Currently in the RDH Coronary Care unit



AMANDA Virgen
41, Herbert
Currently in the RDH High Dependency Unit



TIM Harding
43, Palmerston
Currently in the RDH High Dependency Unit

By ANNIE SANSON

FIVE victims of the bomb blast at one of Darwin's TIO offices last night remained in hospital, some with severe injuries and burns.

Amanda Virgen, 41, of Herbert, and 43-year-old Tim Harding, will have to stay at Royal Darwin Hospital's High Dependency Unit for "at

least another couple of days", while 29-year-old Patrick Dunks is expected to be released from Coronary Care today.

Bruno Long, 47, of Palmerston, and Kalisteni "Kelly" Ioannau were the other two victims who had to remain at RDH's Burns Unit last night.

When released yesterday, 59-year-

old Roy Westley was still in shock about the attack.

"It's not something I'll forget in a hurry," he said.

"It's all still very traumatic, it was pretty scary."

Mr Westley's wife, Helen England, said the attack was going to be "a hard thing to deal with" for everyone involved.

Neill Virgen was clearly shaken yesterday when visiting his sister Amanda.

The 41-year-old mother of two is one of the victims who was directly affected by the blast that set her workplace — the TIO office, next to Wool-

worths — on fire, when 44-year-old "Bird" allegedly lit a shopping trolley loaded with jerry cans of petrol on Wednesday morning.

"This is pretty serious and of course pretty upsetting," Mr Virgen said. "I guess there is nothing we can do when you get involved in something like this."

Dr Ian Norton, director of the disaster and preparedness response, yesterday said prospects of recovery were still unknown for the four patients at the High Dependency Unit and the Burns Unit.

"Usually burns victims have to go through treatment for up to 12 to 16 weeks," he said.

"Some have extensive burns to

their face, upper chest, arms, hands and feet — up to 13 per cent of burns. "We won't know for many weeks what scars will remain."

Before visiting his brother Bruno, 47, at the Burns Unit, Michael Long said he was "devastated" with what had happened and "worried" about his brother.

Other friends and family members of the bomb blast victims were yesterday seen visiting their loved ones, some leaving with tears in their eyes, too shaken to speak.

The mother of 'Kelly' Kalisteni Ioannau was in shock after visiting her daughter at the hospital.

"This is a very stressful time for all of us," a friend said on her behalf.

'Overwhelming' community support

By DANIEL BOURCHIER

LEANNE Harding has been overwhelmed by the support from the community for her husband after he was injured in the bomb blast in Darwin on Wednesday.

West Arnhem Shire occupational health and safety officer Tim Harding was one of the

victims in the High Dependency Unit of Royal Darwin Hospital last night.

Mrs Harding said a woman who helped her husband after the blast visited him in hospital yesterday.

"There is a woman who came up to Tim who helped him and splashed water on him — she came and visited him

with a present yesterday," she said. "The support has been overwhelming."

Mrs Harding, a transition teacher at Driver Primary School, said her husband was visiting TIO for an insurance claim.

She said she was in class teaching at the time and wasn't aware of the unfolding drama until

told by the school principal.

Mrs Harding visited her husband in hospital and said he was in good spirits.

"Physically he is not so well," she said. "There are burns all the way down his right arm and across his upper back."

"I am so concerned about my husband," she said. "My heart goes out to the other victims."

Hospital emergency nightmare

NINETEEN victims of the "horrific" bomb blast in a Darwin TIO office were taken to hospital following the event described as a mini Bali bombing.

Five of those victims remained in Royal Darwin Hospital last night.

The TIO office explosion has been described as the end of the Territory's age of innocence.

Trauma Response Centre executive director Len Notaras (pictured) said that of the 19 victims who were treated at Royal Darwin Hospital, 14 were brought in by St John Ambulance and

one person was taken to hospital in a private car. Another four presented at hospital throughout the night.

"(The final four) were mainly with smoke inhalation and general concerns over their health," he said.

Dr Notaras said the victims had been in a state of disbelief.

"All were telling the same story of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. They were all being very strong."

Dr Notaras said Royal Darwin Hospital was mobilised within 15 minutes of the blast to help the wounded.



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