



# ACT Government

## BUDGET 2006-2007

### MEDIA RELEASE

No. 4

#### ARBORETUM 'FOOTPRINT' FUNDED, BUT PROJECT ON HOLD

Development of the Canberra International Arboretum and Gardens effectively has been put on hold, with almost half the earmarked funding being returned to consolidated revenue and with the remaining \$6 million over two years to be spent putting down the roots of the original plan, the full realisation of which will now be achieved at a later date.

Six species of tree will be planted this winter and spring, with works approval granted by the National Capital Authority.

Chief Minister Jon Stanhope said many Canberrans will be bitterly disappointed that the project will not proceed to the planned timetable, but in the context of a difficult budget it had been necessary to defer the investment in a full-scale arboretum.

"There are many passionate Canberrans who shared my conviction that 'doing nothing' was never an option for this important and beautiful site, which was so ravaged by bushfire in 2001," Mr Stanhope said today. "Nor, as became pretty clear in the aftermath of the 2003 bushfire, was it going to be possible to regrow pines on a site so close to the city. Indeed, this was one of the clear findings of the McLeod Inquiry.

"From this realisation - that the pine plantations familiar to generations of Canberrans were gone for good - grew the dream of a world-class arboretum, a living tree museum, a dream I am convinced will be revived, just as soon as a little more latitude returns to the Territory's finances.

"In the meantime, I have returned \$4.7 million to consolidated revenue and the Government will spend \$6 million over two years on landscaping and tree planting — essentially marking out the footprint upon which future work will build.

"It is essential that the many people who have lent their time and expertise and good will to this vision do not feel that their efforts have been for naught. The plans that were on the drawing board yesterday are still on the drawing board today. The only difference is that as Chief Minister I have made the judgment that, in a tough Budget, this was a venture that could be deferred without adverse consequences. In the context of forests, which take decades to grow and which endure for centuries, a delay of a few short years need not prove insurmountable. This was always a project for the Canberra of the future. It still is."

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**6 June 2006**

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