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BUDGET FUNDS NEW RADIATION SAFETY LEGISLATION

The 2006–07 ACT Budget has provided funding to implement the new radiation protection legislation that is expected to come into force in early 2007.

Announcing this today, Minister for Health Katy Gallagher said the new legislation, unlike the current *Radiation Act 1983*, would specifically address protection from the use of non-ionising radiation sources, in addition to the existing protection from ionising radiation sources.

Non-ionising radiation is a series of electromagnetic waves travelling at the speed of light. Examples are ultraviolet light, visible light, infrared light, microwave radiation and radiofrequency radiation. This radiation can pose a health risk to people if not properly controlled. Both natural sunlight and a multitude of man-made devices are sources of non-ionising radiation.

Ms Gallagher said the funds of \$495,000 over four years would be used to employ a full-time non-ionising radiation safety professional and to purchase equipment for monitoring certain non-ionising radiation such as radiofrequency radiation, ultraviolet light, laser light.

This professional will become a member of the Radiation Safety Section of the Health Protection Service of ACT Health, which has performed the function of ACT-wide radiation protection inspectorate for over two decades.

“This proposal is aligned with the Government’s commitment, through its membership of the Australian Health Ministers’ Conference (AHMC), to implement future radiation protection legislation in accordance with the AHMC’s endorsed National Directory for Radiation Protection,” Ms Gallagher said.

“The initiative will improve the current level of occupational and public radiation protection throughout the ACT from the use of non-ionising radiation sources.”

She said the initiative will allow for implementation of radiation regulatory measures aligned with those required under the National Directory for Radiation Protection, the nationally agreed standard for the regulation and the practice of radiation protection.

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