



ACT Government  
**BUDGET 2006-2007**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

No. 28

**FUNDS FOR BOWEL CANCER SCREENING PROGRAM**

The ACT Budget has allocated \$780,000 over four years towards the introduction of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program in the ACT.

Announcing the funding, Minister for Health Katy Gallagher said bowel cancer was the most common internal cancer in Australians, with one in 24 people expected to develop bowel cancer in their lifetime.

“Trials have demonstrated that regular screening can reduce mortality from bowel cancer by 15 to 30 per cent,” she said.

“The national program is a new initiative by the Australian Government that is expected to commence in late 2006 with the mailing out of faecal occult blood tests (FOBTs) to all those who turn 55 or 65 years of age after 1 May 2006.

“Through this program, it is expected that between five and eight additional bowel cancers and 30 advanced precancerous polyps will be detected each year.

“Detecting and treating bowel cancer at an early stage, and removing polyps before they develop into bowel cancers, is expected to decrease the number of advanced bowel cancers detected in the future and to save lives.”

Ms Gallagher said the ACT needs to develop a strategy for the efficient and effective follow-up of patients with positive FOBTs and equitable and timely access to colonoscopy services.

This would be developed in consultation with clinical and other key stakeholders, through the Office of the Chief Health Officer.

Ms Gallagher said that under the program, the Territory will be required to fund follow up tests, including visits to gastroenterologists and subsequent colonoscopies performed and all pathology on specimens arising from those colonoscopies.

The funding is required to ensure appropriate monitoring of the screening pathway for participants who require any follow up subsequent to positive results.

---

**6 June 2006**

Enquiries: Angie Drake

6205 0139

0408 092 016

angie.drake@act.gov.au