



ACT Government

BUDGET 2006-2007

MEDIA RELEASE

No. 69

\$67 MILLION FOR NEW SCHOOLS IN THE A.C.T.

Reflecting changes in community expectations and demographics, the Stanhope Government has provided over \$67 million in funding for new schools in this year's Budget.

Minister for Education and Training, Andrew Barr, said schools will be built in West Belconnen and East Gungahlin and \$1 million will be provided for a feasibility study into a joint College and Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) campus in the Gungahlin region.

"This Budget provides \$45 million for the new high school in West Belconnen," Mr Barr said.

"Due to open at the beginning of the 2009 school year, the new West Belconnen High School will be a state of the art facility catering for about 1100 students from pre-school age to year 10, providing parents with the convenience of a single drop off point if they have more than one child.

"The school will also deliver a new way of teaching and learning with four learning areas – a pre-school, junior school, middle school and senior school – departing from the traditional structure of schooling and catering for the individual school community."

Mr Barr said the Stanhope Government has also provided over \$21 million for a new primary school and pre-school in Gungahlin East, on top of \$1.9 million allocated in previous years budgets for forward design work.

"The building of this new school in Harrison reflects the demographic needs of the growing population in Gungahlin," he said.

"The Harrison school will provide an inclusive setting for students with special needs and provide opportunities for special needs students to be integrated into the mainstream education programs. Five extra classrooms will be provided for students with disabilities as well as specific facilities such as special toilets and change facilities."

Mr Barr said the Government has also honoured its commitment to examine the feasibility of a new secondary college for the Gungahlin region with funding for a study into the prospect of combining a CIT campus with a college in Gungahlin.

"We have allocated \$1 million in this Budget to conduct a feasibility study into a joint secondary college and CIT campus in the Gungahlin region. The study will also examine opportunities for the co-location of library, sporting and other community facilities adjacent to the college site," he said.

6 June 2006

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