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## **Boost for high demand Therapy Services**

High demand therapy services for children in the ACT are set to expand with the ACT Government's announcement today of a funding package totalling \$5.822 million over four years.

Minister for Community Services, Katy Gallagher, today announced \$2.279 million over four years for Therapy ACT's early intervention and support services for preschool age children with a disability, an initiative that fulfils a 2008 election commitment.

There was more positive news with the commitment of \$3.543 million over four years for an additional eight full-time speech therapists in response to increased demand.

Therapy ACT provides free therapy and support services in the areas of physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology, social work and psychology for children and adults with developmental delays. It also delivers an autism assessment and family support program.

"The ACT, like many jurisdictions, has been experiencing a high demand for diagnosis and therapy services for children with a disability," Ms Gallagher said.

"As well, we have had an increase in demand for speech therapy for young children with high priority needs.

"The ACT Government committed during the election to addressing the waiting lists for speech therapy. We are confident that this additional funding for Therapy ACT will alleviate some of the delays that have been experienced for these services."

The funding will expand the current post diagnostic family support service and assist parents in better understanding their child's disability, developing management strategies around communication, behaviour management, play and sensory processing.

"Therapy ACT's work is strongly evidence-based, and this will be a focus for the development of a play based therapy intervention program," Ms Gallagher said.

“The Government will continue to invest in our community, targeting areas of need, and deliver quality services for the people of Canberra.”

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**Media Contact: Kathryn Roberts 6205 0242(w) 0402 399 907(m)**