



ACT Government
2005-2006 BUDGET

MEDIA RELEASE

**FURTHER SUPPORT PLEDGED FOR
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS**

The ACT Government has allocated more than \$5 million in new funding to support Canberra's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Chief Minister Jon Stanhope said he was proud of his Government's record to date in relation to Indigenous issues. "Of course, there is always more that can be done," he said.

"The funding for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit to service child protection and youth justice clients is another significant step in assisting those in greatest need," Mr Stanhope said.

"With funding of \$2.9 million in the Budget over the next four years, this unit will be responsible for providing culturally appropriate support and services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families."

Mr Stanhope said a further \$2.1 million from the 2004-05 2nd Appropriation would provide much needed support for young Indigenous teenagers considered to be 'at risk'.

"For young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males, aged between 12 and 18 years, this funding will provide supported accommodation at a time when they need it most," Mr Stanhope said.

"Importantly, this budget initiative will also provide these young people with ready access to culturally appropriate education and vocational training.

"It continues to demonstrate our Social Plan commitment to tackle Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage at its root cause."

The ACT Budget also provides \$400,000 over the next four years for the ongoing employment of an Indigenous Liaison Officer to coordinate the Ngambra Circle Sentencing Court, as well as the operational costs of conducting the Court.

Mr Stanhope said his Government continued to work cooperatively with the Chief Minister's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Council to identify the areas of greatest need.

"We must continue to ensure that every Canberra citizen has a decent standard of living and is given every chance to reach their full potential," Mr Stanhope said.

Statement ends