



## ACT Government

# 2002-2003 BUDGET

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### ACT BUDGET ENCOURAGES MULTICULTURAL DIVERSITY

The 2002-03 ACT Budget will continue to support the ACT's multicultural community with new funding for cultural diversity, Chief Minister Jon Stanhope said.

"The ACT Government is committed to ensuring that all Canberrans can be active participants in our community life and can benefit from the cultural diversity that exists within our community," Mr Stanhope said.

"Language skills and cultural understanding are particularly important in helping people from diverse backgrounds to be contributing members of the community.

"We are providing \$208,000 over four years for a new grant program to provide additional assistance for the operation of community language schools in the ACT, a key election commitment. Grants will be allocated to the schools in greatest need.

"Community language schools play a vital role in assisting the multicultural community groups to maintain their cultural identity and language, and to transmit these to their young people. As well as sustaining cultural diversity, the programs also help address challenges of intergenerational conflict and alienation among young people of culturally diverse backgrounds."

The Chief Minister said the budget also delivers on the Government's commitment to supporting multicultural communities to undertake radio broadcasting, with \$416,000 over four years for a new grants program to provide programs of interest in community languages.

"Multicultural community broadcasting assists with community cohesion and also ensures that Canberra's non-English speaking community receives adequate information about a broad range of important community services," he said.

"Multicultural broadcasting is an essential source of information and cultural contact for people of diverse backgrounds, particularly those who are house-bound due to illness, disability or carer responsibilities."

The Chief Minister said the 2002-03 ACT Budget continued to support ongoing activities such as the National Multicultural Festival and the Multicultural Grants Program.

"We have allocated \$290,000 for the 2003 National Multicultural Festival to build on the success of this year's event. The festival is an important event in the ACT's cultural calendar, and is an affirmation of the Government's, and the community's, commitment to multiculturalism," he said.



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“The Multicultural Grants Program will receive \$100,000 next financial year to provide much valued assistance to community groups for a wide range of community projects, including participation in the 2003 National Multicultural Festival.

“More than \$2.4 million over four years has been provided for the Home and Community Care Program. Over 30 percent of clients accessing this program are people from non-English speaking backgrounds.”

The Chief Minister said that the Budget would continue to support initiatives that help people learn English and other skills and to find employment.

“The ACT Government will continue to provide access to English language classes at the CIT for people released into the community from immigration detention centres,” he said.

“We have also revised the Work Experience Program in the ACT Public Service to ensure that people who successfully complete the program receive ongoing assistance if they are not able to find paid work straight away.

“Work will also continue on development of a whole-of-government strategy addressing issues of racism and unfair discrimination.”

The Chief Minister said the Government’s programs and initiatives for the multicultural community will be developed with the assistance of the newly established Ministerial Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs and in wide consultation with the community.  
**Statement ends 25 June 2002**