



ACT Government

Building a Better Looking Canberra

Embargoed until 1 May 2001

The 2001- 02 Budget includes a wide range of initiatives aimed at improving the safety and look of the Canberra region, including a new initiative aimed at providing assistance for private property owners affected by graffiti attacks.

"The ACT Government has a strong commitment to maintaining the appearance and safety of Canberra," ACT Minister for Urban Services Brendan Smyth said today.

"The 2001-02 Budget provides funding for a wide range of urban improvements aimed at making sure our city, the Bush Capital, is at its best for the community and visitors to enjoy.

"In an ACT Government-first, \$200,000 per year commencing in 2001- 02, has been allocated for removing graffiti on private property. In the past, graffiti removal has been targeted at public assets, with the successful 'Graffiti Removal Youth Employment Program', however graffiti remaining on private properties has detracted from the results achieved in the public domain.

"The expertise developed by contractors in cleaning public assets will now be made available to assist owners to clean graffiti from private property. In line with this initiative, the Government is also developing a new whole-of-government graffiti management strategy aimed at minimising and preventing graffiti vandalism," said Mr Smyth.

A wide range of capital works has been identified in the Budget to continue the ACT Government's major focus of revitalising Civic as the Heart of the National Capital and improving public places in shopping centres around Canberra.

"Improvements to our shopping centres are integral to the ACT Government's retail policy," said Mr Smyth.

\$5.8 million worth of projects commencing in 2001-02 to revitalise commercial areas and to make them more accessible to the wider community include:

- \$2 million for the refurbishment of Hobart Place in the City, to continue the successful 'Our City' program, which has seen Civic transformed into a vibrant and exciting centre;
- \$3 million for the upgrade of the Griffith, Kambah and Jamison shopping centres;
- \$300,000 will also be allocated for forward design of refurbishments for three new local shopping centres; and
- \$400,000 for public toilet refurbishments across Canberra.

ACT Budget 2001-02

The program of safety upgrades to playgrounds will also continue, with a further \$1.25 million allocated to commence in 2001-02. Canberra is renowned for its children's playgrounds, with about 450 of them dotted throughout the region. Many of these were built when suburbs were first developed, so it is important we ensure they continue to meet the highest available standards.

The upkeep of Canberra's parks to a high standard is also a priority, with \$600,000 set aside to cover a range of works including rehabilitation of vegetation and park infrastructure for the improvement of public safety and amenity.

The replacement of older trees as required by Canberra Urban Parks and Places will continue with \$500,000 provided for street and park tree replacement.

Belconnen Lakeshore needs and amenities will be addressed in a \$350,000 forward design project on refurbishment of the lakeshore.

Allocation of a further \$1 million to the successful Street Smart program will include additional tree pruning, weed spraying and removal, footpath maintenance, repairs and renovation of road signs and line markings. Local parks and centres will also benefit with new facilities such as drinking fountains, waste bins, and refurbishment and replacement of outdated street furniture. In parks and urban open space, over-mature wattles and other native trees and shrubs will be replaced, and parking areas at various barbeque sites will also be refurbished.

"This wide range of works will go a long way to continuing the Government's program to enhance Canberra's urban environment. The ACT Government is committed to maintaining our city's great reputation as one of the best looking cities in Australia for the enjoyment of residents and visitors," Mr Smyth said.

Statement ends:

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