

## CHAPTER 2

### **Nation Building and Jobs Plan: *Building Prosperity for the Future and Supporting Jobs Now***

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## 2.1 NATION BUILDING AND JOBS PLAN

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On 5 February 2009 the Australian and State and Territory Governments signed the *National Partnership Agreement on the Nation Building and Jobs Plan: Building Prosperity for the Future and Supporting Jobs Now*. This Plan extended the Commonwealth stimulus measures announced in December 2008 under the *Economic Security Strategy*.

The ACT is working with the Commonwealth to implement the *Nation Building and Jobs Plan* to limit the extent of the economic slowdown and associated job losses. The ACT will benefit from around a total of \$334.5 million in Commonwealth funding under this Plan, with \$229.3 million of this amount for school infrastructure and \$102.7 million for social housing. In addition, ACT households and businesses will benefit from estimated funding under the Plan for:

- a one-off tax bonus for eligible taxpayers of up to \$900 for individual and families, depending on income thresholds, estimated at \$141 million, the single income family bonus (estimated at \$14.9 million) and the training and learning bonus, the education entry payment supplement and the back to school bonus (estimated at \$37.5 million). Some additional support is also being provided for the unemployed;
- road safety through the Black Spot Program (\$2.4 million), for regional and local community infrastructure (estimated at \$8 million) and the National Highway Network (estimated at \$0.1 million);
- improving the energy efficiency of homes through the addition of solar hot water and ceiling insulation (estimated at around \$28 million);
- additional defence housing, with a number of the properties to be built in the ACT (estimated at over \$3 million); and
- small business and general business tax breaks (estimated at around \$32 million) that support the maintenance and bringing forward of capital expenditure.

### **Rapid Delivery of Stimulus**

To maximise the timely and effective delivery of the *Nation Building and Jobs Plan* the ACT agreed to national coordination arrangements to support monitoring and implementation of the infrastructure and stimulus measures.

There was also agreement that the ACT would not use the funding provided under the Plan to finance existing capital works being undertaken for schools, social housing and roads. The Commonwealth funding was for additional effort in these areas.

## **ACT Stimulus Taskforce**

A small Taskforce has been set up in the ACT, led by a Coordinator General, reporting to the Chief Minister. The Taskforce is overseeing the rollout of the planned infrastructure and construction in the ACT and ensuring the ACT maximises the share of the stimulus package it receives. The Taskforce has also been identifying changes to systems, procedures, practices or policies that are required in order to meet the Plan's timeframes.

To expedite the schools' construction program, exemptions from development applications have been made to projects where appropriate. Other measures are under consideration to streamline planning approval processes to ensure the ACT receives the full benefit of the timely delivery of the stimulus package.

Further detail on the rollout of the main elements of the *Nation Building and Jobs Plan* in the ACT follows.

## 2.2 BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION

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The Commonwealth Government will provide around \$230 million to the ACT over the next three financial years for new facilities and refurbishment upgrades at the ACT's public and non-government schools. This will allow schools to build and upgrade facilities which will also be available for broader community use. The investment will help to stimulate the local economy through the scale and pace of construction work undertaken.

Building the Education Revolution (BER) has three programs:

- *Primary Schools for the 21st Century*: investment of \$208 million in the ACT to build or renew large-scale infrastructure in all primary and special schools, including libraries, halls and classrooms;
- *National School Pride (NSP) Program*: investment of \$20.8 million in the ACT to refurbish and renew existing infrastructure and build minor infrastructure with up to \$200,000 provided per school, subject to the size of the school; and
- *Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools*: an application-based fund to build new science laboratories and language learning centres in secondary schools that can demonstrate both need and capacity to complete construction by 30 June 2010.

All ACT primary schools will benefit from this program with new or refurbished halls, gymnasiums, libraries and other multi purpose buildings funded through the *Primary Schools for the 21st Century*.

The ACT is receiving \$12 million in funding under round one of the *National School Pride (NSP) Program* to improve learning environments. Up to \$200,000 per school is being provided to 77 ACT Government and non-government schools. ACT schools will receive a further \$1.7 million under round two of this program.

ACT schools are refurbishing assembly halls, libraries, classrooms, school entrances, outdoor sporting, learning and play areas and shade structures and purchasing interactive whiteboards with funding provided under the NSP.

ACT secondary schools will also benefit from the construction or refurbishment of science laboratories and or language learning centres under the *Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools* program. ACT schools in most need or experiencing disadvantage will benefit most from this program, which will allocate funding on a competitive basis. ACT schools are currently being identified.

ACT students are also benefiting from the ACT Government's significant investment in building new schools and refurbishing older schools. School environments have also been improved through increased maintenance activity.



## **2.3 SOCIAL HOUSING**

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The ACT has been working closely with the Commonwealth on its reform agenda for social housing. The Commonwealth will provide \$102.8 million to the ACT between 2008-09 to 2011-12 for the construction of around 290 social housing units and repairs and maintenance to around 240 existing public housing dwellings.

The ACT will receive funding of \$96.4 million for new social housing in two stages.

- Stage One – The ACT has been allocated \$11.1 million for suitable projects already in its development pipeline that can be brought forward and built by the end of 2009-10. The Commonwealth approved stage one construction projects at the end of March 2009.
  - Stage one constructions, scheduled to commence in 2009, include townhouses, duplexes and other properties that were already in the development pipeline. These are located in Franklin, Ainslie, Downer, Wanniasa, Richardson, Gowrie, West Belconnen, Narrabundah and Garran. The properties will mainly provide homes for smaller households, although they include a number for larger families. The Hartigan Garden redevelopment at Garran will provide new housing for the current aged tenants. Other properties will be provided to existing ACT Housing tenants and people on the priority waiting list.
- Stage Two – \$85.3 million will be allocated from 2009-10 to 2011-12 to the ACT on the basis of an assessment of suitable proposals.

The ACT is also contributing funding and land to the program, with around \$1.8 million allocated in the first stage of the program. The Commonwealth has also provided \$6.4 million to the ACT for repairs and maintenance of existing public housing stock over two years.

The Social Housing Program under the Plan will provide significant stimulus to the building and construction industry in the ACT. It will drive significant reform in social housing, help consolidate waiting lists, assist in growing the not-for-profit sector, fund reform and contribute to reducing the concentration of disadvantage.

### **Defence Housing**

The Commonwealth Government has approved funding of around \$252 million for Defence Housing Australia to construct an additional 802 new houses nationally. It is expected that approximately \$3 million of this will flow through to the ACT for the construction of around 10 homes.



## 2.4 TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

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### Transport Infrastructure

The ACT received an additional \$100,000 in the National Highway Network Maintenance program component of the Nation Building Program in 2008-09.

The ACT also received an additional \$2.4 million in the Black Spot program component of the Nation Building Program for the 2009 calendar year.

In addition to funding provided by the Commonwealth through the *Nation Building and Jobs Plan*, the ACT will receive:

- \$28 million through the Roads to Recovery Program over five years. The first phase of investment under this program (\$9.5 million) will be allocated towards the upgrade of the Kings Highway to complement the ACT Government's (\$3.5 million) and the Department of Defence's (\$7 million) contributions to the project; and
- \$37.5 million through the Building Australia Program which will provide \$30 million for the Upgrade of Airport Roads and \$7.5 million for Lanyon Drive Upgrade Stage 2.

### Community Infrastructure

The Commonwealth Government previously announced investment of \$300 million in local governments to stimulate local growth and economic activity in 2008-09 in November 2008. This funding package is available in two components: \$250 million in the Regional, Local and Community Infrastructure Program (RLCIP) and \$50 million in the RLCIP – Strategic Projects program.

The ACT received \$2 million under the original RLCIP to upgrade Eddison and Glebe Parks.

- The Eddison Youth Recreation Facility will provide youth spaces, performance stages, rest and respite areas, iPod and wireless docks, art display areas and a street style skate plaza with rideable objects such as railings and steps.
- The Glebe Park Upgrade will include a new shade sail over the existing playground, a multifunctional seating and play wall and an events stage in the southern zone of the park.

In February 2009, as part of the Nation Building Program, the Commonwealth Government announced an increase in the RLCIP – Strategic Projects fund from \$50 million to \$550 million to be allocated on a competitive basis.

