



# BUDGET 2009-2010 INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY

## MEDIA RELEASE

No. 2

### **Paid maternity leave extended to 18 weeks**

The ACT Government will introduce the nation's most generous whole of government paid maternity leave scheme for public sector workers and double bonding leave, Chief Minister, Jon Stanhope announced today.

The 2009-10 Budget provides funding of \$7.06 million over four years to extend paid maternity leave for ACT public service employees to 18 weeks.

The increase, which covers all ACT Government agencies, puts the ACT ahead of the Federal Government as well as other states and the Northern Territory.

Mr Stanhope said the investment would help make the ACT public service the employer of choice for young working families.

"The ACT Labor Government understands that some workers struggle to find an appropriate balance between work and family commitments," Mr Stanhope said.

"This boost will give working mothers and fathers access to better conditions within the ACT public service and the flexibility they seek when raising a family.

"This initiative also delivers on our election commitment to extend paid maternity leave to 18 weeks and double paid paternity leave."

The scheme will enable the ACT Government to provide an additional four weeks paid maternity leave for qualifying ACT public service employees on top of the current 14 weeks paid leave.

As part of the initiative, the Government will also double its paid paternity leave, providing two weeks of bonding leave.

"I anticipate that more women will be attracted to work in the ACT public service because of our flexible work arrangements and family friendly conditions.

“This extension to maternity leave will help position the ACT Government as the employer of choice for young working families,” Mr Stanhope said.

The scheme will take effect on 1 July 2009.

In addition to the new 18 weeks paid maternity leave, women in the ACT public service can access up to three years of unpaid leave following the birth of their child and work part-time for up to three years after maternity leave.

“The Government will continue to invest in the community and target new expenditure at measures that will allow a more productive ACT economy.”

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