



Kate Carnell MLA

Chief Minister

Australian Capital
Territory

\$17 MILLION COMMITTED **OVER NEXT FOUR YEARS TO HELP BUILD** **SOCIAL CAPITAL IN CANBERRA**

ACT Chief Minister Kate Carnell announced today a \$3.5 million injection in the 2000-2001 ACT Budget for programs and services that will build 'social capital' in Canberra.

"Social capital' is a relatively new term for most governments. When we talk about social capital, in many ways we are referring to the well-being or strength of the community," Mrs Carnell said.

"A community with strong social capital has well developed networks based on shared interests, enduring relationships and trust. Social capital is built from partnerships among the community, business and government sectors that facilitate and build interdependency, trust, mutual support and collective action.

"Governments around the world are realising the important role social capital plays in society – that it is just as important as financial capital (property and equipment), environmental capital (land, farming and mining) and human capital (the skills and education of the workforce)."

The ACT Government has described Canberra's social capital in a supplementary budget paper entitled *Canberra: Building Social Capital*. Like the Budget and the State of the Territory Report, the work on social capital is a key component of the ACT Government's overall focus on strengthening the community and improving Canberrans' lives.

"The focus of this government during its first five years in office has by necessity, been on prudent financial management. In that time, we have balanced the books and ensured that we don't continue spending more than we can afford. We now have a solid foundation on which to start building on our quality of life," Mrs Carnell said.

"There is no doubt that we already have strong social capital in Canberra, but we need to do more to make our community stronger. There are no easy solutions for many community issues like alienation, disadvantage, poverty and exclusion. These issues must be addressed if we are to remain a caring community.

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"We are providing \$3.5 million next financial year and \$4.5 million in future years for initiatives that will build on our social capital. The initiatives will strengthen links between the government, community and business sectors and improve our quality of life."

Mrs Carnell said that while the ACT Government has a major role in building social capital in Canberra, it cannot enhance the well-being of the community on its own.

"Social capital is not just about dollars in budgets, or government action, or partnerships with the community. It cannot be legislated into existence. Social capital is about all Canberrans working together to create a better society," Mrs Carnell said.

The 2000-2001 funding will be spent in the following ways:

Supporting families and local communities - \$1.7 million

- \$700,000 a year for a *Schools as Communities* program using schools to strengthen links between local communities and government, particularly those for families and children.
- \$500,000 a year for a *Community Renewal Program* using precinct community groups to help tackle broader community issues like safety, the environment and opportunities for local employment.
- \$500,000 a year for a *Canberra Community Foundation*, which will bring government and business together in a philanthropic agency to support community initiated programs.

Investing in caring communities - \$1.57 million, including:

- \$140,000 a year for initiatives addressing depression.
- \$325,000 per year for a *Healthy Families* program.
- \$120,000 a year to address substance abuse by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the ACT.
- \$70,000 a year to improve the health of 'at risk' young people through the Junction Youth Health Service.
- \$185,000 a year for accommodation support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.
- \$130,000 a year for intensive support for juvenile offenders.



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- \$200,000 a year for counselling young sex offenders.



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Towards future communities - \$230,000

- \$100,000 a year for a *Community Mentoring Scheme* to develop a new generation of Canberra leaders by promoting skills development for young Canberra leaders.
- \$50,000 a year for '*Community Online*' initiatives, extending the support the government already provides in helping peak community groups develop an Internet presence.
- \$80,000 a year for a *Community Links Portal* that will provide a mechanism to promote information on the ACT community and specific community groups via a single Internet site.

ENDS/ 23 May 2000

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