



ACT Government 2004-2005 BUDGET

MEDIA RELEASE

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE EXPANSION IN BUDGET

The Stanhope Government will boost its commitment to crime prevention and the enhancement of the justice system through an expanded program of restorative justice for the ACT, Chief Minister and the Attorney General, Jon Stanhope, said today.

The 2004-05 Budget provides \$2.2 million over four years to expand the restorative justice system program.

The role of restorative justice is to complement and enhance the traditional criminal justice response in dealing with an offence through a conference that brings together the victim and offender, each with support persons, under the facilitation of a neutral conference convenor.

“This initiative will extend the existing limited pre-court conferencing program now run by the police and allow the ACT to offer a range of restorative justice options for use through all stages of the criminal justice process.

“I am pleased to implement an election commitment of the Government which is also a key crime prevention and sentencing strategy of the *ACT Criminal Justice Strategic Plan 2002-2005*.

“Restorative justice makes a distinction between bad actions and bad people by shaming the behaviour while supporting the offender and their re-integration into society – and it is contingent on an offender acknowledging they have made a mistake.

“Holding offenders accountable for their actions and the consequences of those actions for others, through acceptance of responsibility for the offence, is a core element of restorative justice.

“Research has shown high victim and offender levels of satisfaction with the restorative justice process.

“All relevant government agencies have exhaustively considered expert advice and world best practice in developing the model to be adopted in the ACT.

“A dedicated unit will be established to screen offenders for suitability, to prepare victims and offenders, to convene conferences, to monitor agreements between offenders and victims, and to evaluate the program.

“We will adopt a staged implementation process for the introduction of the service for juvenile offenders in the first year. A universally available system will be developed over the subsequent years,” Mr Stanhope said.

Statement Ends

