



ACT Government
2004-2005 BUDGET

MEDIA RELEASE

REBUILDING A BETTER BIRRIGAI

The Stanhope Government has provided \$2.1 million in the 2004-05 Budget to enable the re-establishment of Birrigai, which was severely damaged during the bushfires on 18 January 2003.

“Birrigai has been an important and memorable part of ACT schooling for many years. While the Government’s final contribution is dependent upon settlement of the insurance claim, these funds will enable the re-establishment of Birrigai to proceed without delay,” said Minister for Education, Youth and Family Services, Ms Katy Gallagher MLA.

This funding will see the:

- ➔ return of Birrigai to a functioning educational facility with accommodation capacity equivalent to pre- bushfire levels;
- ➔ development of Birrigai as a curriculum extension service for all curriculum areas;
- ➔ broadening of Birrigai’s function to include students from preschool to year 12;
- ➔ provision of a showcase for sustainability in building design and function.

The rebuilt Birrigai will offer a larger range of accommodation options for students of different ages. As well as the existing dormitory accommodation, new huts will be constructed to offer accommodation more suited to older students. This will provide an opportunity to extend relationships with the neighbouring Tidbinbilla site.

It is anticipated that Final Sketch Plans will be endorsed by mid July 2004, with construction to commence in September 2004 and completed by July 2005.

Birrigai has offered a limited program to schools from its original site since the beginning of term 4 2003, and will continue to operate on a limited level during some parts of the construction phase. Programs continue to run at the Botanical Gardens and at Dairy Flat.

“Birrigai is an invaluable asset to Canberra’s school students, teaching them the principles of ecological sustainability by focusing on science, Indigenous education, wetlands ecology and sustainable agriculture practices. Thankfully ACT students will continue to benefit from these unique and valuable programs for years to come,” Ms Gallagher concluded.

Statement Ends.