



## ACT Government

# 2003-2004 BUDGET

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### ACT BUDGET SUPPORTS BETTER OUTCOMES FOR WOMEN

The 2003-04 ACT Budget progresses key issues raised in the *Status of Women in the ACT* report, Minister for Women Katy Gallagher said.

“The ACT Government is committed to recognising and addressing the diverse range of needs of women in the ACT and improving the status of women,” Ms Gallagher said.

“The *Status of Women in the ACT* report emphasised the need to direct a policy focus on meeting the needs of isolated and disadvantaged women. This will be a key priority of the new Strategic Plan for Women, which will be the focus of work for the Office for Women next financial year.

“The report raised issues for women relating to employment, mental health, violence and safety, drug and alcohol use and sport. We will progress many of these issues through this budget and through the ongoing work of government agencies next financial year.

“For example, the budget will support initiatives that will improve employment outcomes for women. While ACT women generally have high levels of education, relatively high socio-economic status and high levels of success in the workforce, there is still room for improvement.

“The budget supports the recent change to paid maternity leave provisions in the ACT Public Service. We have increased the duration of paid maternity leave from 12 to 14 weeks, effective from 11 March 2003. This increase, along with other important family-friendly initiatives, positions the ACT as a leader in providing flexible job conditions.

“I’m also pleased that we are continuing to support the Chamber of Women in Business, with \$10,000 in 2003-04. Around 35 per cent of small business operators in the ACT are women.”

Ms Gallagher said many of the health initiatives in the budget will be of benefit to women, as women and children are major users of health services, and the responsibility of caring for people who are sick or who have a disability falls most heavily on women.

“For example, \$2.8 million over four years will increase support for frail aged and young people with a disability and their carers. The Home and Community Care program assists with independence and helps these people remain in the home by providing transport, domestic support, personal care and social support.

“\$5.15 million in capital works funding will help address unmet need in the provision of post-acute rehabilitation, transitional care, psycho-geriatric and aged respite care services.

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Media Release



Another \$4 million will refurbish paediatric services, providing parent accommodation and parent-in-care facilities.

“I am pleased to see an additional \$6.16 million being provided over four years for mental health services, which were highlighted as a particular issue in the *Status of Women* report. Part of this extra funding will go towards improving existing home-based outreach services and providing new outreach services in Gungahlin, as well as to enhancing community-based services in Tuggeranong and Woden.

“The Status of Women report raised various issues relating to women and their use of drugs and alcohol. The Government is currently developing its next Alcohol and Drug Strategy, and women’s perspectives and issues will be a key consideration. \$250,000 is being provided next financial year to ensure immediate responses can be made once the strategy is completed.

“\$5.085 million is also being provided from the capital works budget for redevelopment of the Alcohol and Drug Therapeutic Centres at Isabella Plains and Fadden, with the Fadden centre to include a childcare centre and accommodation for an outreach program.

“The Women and Children’s Tutorial Room at the Canberra Hospital will also be refurbished, with \$20,000 in this budget, and a further \$50,000 will be provided to refurbish the Canberra Sexual Health Centre.

“Funding is also being provided for an additional breast cancer nurse to provide treatment and care for women following breast cancer.”

The Minister said the budget also progresses key outcomes of the recently released framework on violence and safety for women.

“We know that ACT women are uneasy about harassment and safety in various situations, particularly using public transport after dark, walking in their local neighbourhoods and in their own homes,” she said.

“Prevention of violence is one of the framework’s three outcomes. \$3 million is being provided over two years for the implementation of neighbourhood improvement projects for the suburbs of Braddon, Deakin, Lyneham, O’Connor and Turner. With Urban Services’ other streetlighting improvement programs, I anticipate that these improvements will help make public places safer in many parts of Canberra.

“The budget provides \$411,000 over four years for addressing elder abuse. Almost five per cent of older people are abused in some way, and two thirds of these are women. Elder abuse can take place in old people’s homes, in health facilities and in the family home.

“The funding will go towards a new telephone hotline for reporting elder abuse, a community awareness campaign and the development of a set of comprehensive training materials.

“\$180,000 is being provided in 2003-04 for a pilot project to improve the investigation and prosecution of sexual offences in the ACT. This is a key action under the violence and safety framework’s outcome of protection and justice.”

The Minister said the budget continues to support women’s sport to address the current inequitable funding levels.

“We will again be providing \$180,000 to the ACT’s champion women’s elite teams, with the Canberra Capitals Basketball team receiving \$100,000, and the Canberra Strikers Hockey team and the Canberra Eclipse Soccer Team each receiving \$40,000.

“\$60,000 will also be provided for women’s sport under the Sport and Recreation Grant Program, and four \$5000 female coaching scholarships are being funded through the ACT Academy of Sport.” Ms Gallagher concluded.  
**Statement ends.**