



## ACT Government

# 2002-2003 BUDGET

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### **OLDER CANBERRANS - GOVERNMENT DELIVERS ON RESPITE CARE AND PSYCHO- GERIATRIC PROMISES**

The first Stanhope Government Budget funds the election commitment to provide an additional \$1 million a year for respite care and to better support older people with dementia-related challenging behaviour, Chief Minister, Jon Stanhope, said today.

Budget 2002-03 provides an extra \$1 million a year to expand respite care services for older people, younger people with a disability and younger people with a mental illness. In line with the Government's Older Canberrans Policy, this initiative provides a further \$300,000 a year to support older people needing psycho-geriatric care.

"Many people in the ACT are caring for family or friends with an illness or disability.

"They often do this with little support from the Government or the community, yet their care allows families to stay together and saves the community millions of dollars a year.

"Caring for another is a great act of kindness and love yet it can be extremely draining for everyone involved.

"Carers need our recognition and support and they deserve to be able to take a break knowing their loved one is in good hands.

"The person receiving the care can often benefit, too, from the change in environment that respite care allows.

"My Government listened to the problems faced by carers and we promised an extra million dollars a year in respite care to help make life a little easier.

"This Budget meets that commitment," said Mr Stanhope.

The Chief Minister said the additional funding would be directed to the areas of highest need in the community.

"We will provide additional resources across all areas of respite care, covering clients in the disability, aged care and mental health areas.

Mr Stanhope said the Government was undertaking an empirical needs analysis to ensure the additional funds are being allocated to the right areas.

The study is a necessary step to ensure we have the priorities right and we are meeting the needs of clients and carers," said Mr Stanhope.



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Media Release

The Chief Minister said “that this initiative, which is partly funded from internal growth funds, will provide additional resources to enhance the capacity of existing residential facilities in the ACT to care for clients with dementia related challenging behaviors.

The program will provide training to increase staff skills in working with the elderly clients with challenging behaviors and will work closely with the expanded older persons mental health service. This service will allow specialist care to be provided in the ACT and reduce the need for clients to travel interstate.

“In an ageing population, we are seeing an increase in the need for respite care for frail older people and the additional funding will help in providing respite for older people with challenging behaviours due to dementia,” said Mr Stanhope.

“At this time in their lives, and most particularly when they are unwell, older people and their families and carers need our support and care and they need stability and certainty.

“My Government will support older people and we will ensure they have access to the services and facilities they require,” said Mr Stanhope.

Mr Stanhope also stated that he was not going to let the Commonwealth off the hook in relation to psycho-geriatric care.

“The Commonwealth Government also has a responsibility in this area and I will be asking the Commonwealth to match the ACT Government’s commitment in this area,” said Mr Stanhope.

**Statement ends 25 June 2002**