



ACT Government

BUDGET 2007-2008

Taking the Territory forward

MEDIA RELEASE

No. 25

ADDITIONAL \$12.6 MILLION FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The ACT Government will provide an extra \$12.6 million for mental health services over the next four years under the 2007-2008 Budget.

Minister for Health Katy Gallagher said today this investment is further evidence of the ACT Labor Government's commitment to the provision of accessible and effective mental health services.

"One in five people in the community will face mental illness in their lifetime," she said. "This additional investment will assist in ensuring that members of our community have timely access to the resources necessary to meet their needs into the future," she said.

Ms Gallagher said this Budget initiative addresses identified mental health needs in the ACT.

These include community supported accommodation services, alternatives to hospitalisation for people with a mental illness, enhanced access to community mental health care across the care continuum, additional qualified and skilled staff, and increased capacity in inpatient settings for clients, visitors and staff.

The funding will allow for:

- enhanced staffing of the Older Persons Mental Health Inpatient Unit;
- recruitment of Emergency Department Mental Health nurses;
- a 24 Hour 'Step up/Step down' and Outreach program as an alternative to hospitalisation;
- care coordination improvement programs; and
- additional staff and training to ensure mental health continues to be staffed and skilled appropriately across the changing mental health delivery system.

Ms Gallagher said the Budget had also provided \$2.290 million to fund the forward design of a 40-bed adult mental health acute inpatient unit at The Canberra Hospital, and \$1.2 million to fund the forward design of a 15-bed secure mental health unit.

"The 40-bed unit will replace The Canberra Hospital's existing Psychiatric Services Unit," Ms Gallagher said.

"Once this design work is completed, a new facility will improve patient and staff safety and provide the environment within which to better implement patient centred care.

5 June 2007

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“Flexibility of design will enable patients to be accommodated so that they receive care in an environment best suited to their needs.

“The 15-bed secure mental health unit, articulated with the new adult acute mental health inpatient unit at the Canberra Hospital, will provide a new service accommodating ACT residents, including prisoners from the Alexander Maconochie Centre, whose mental health requires short-to-medium term treatment and placement in a medium-high secure facility.”