



ACT Government

2002-2003 BUDGET

BUDGET IMPROVES OUTCOMES FOR ACT WOMEN

The 2002-03 ACT Budget will improve outcomes for women in the ACT by addressing priority areas of health, housing and safety, Chief Minister Jon Stanhope said.

“The Government is committed to improving the status of women in the ACT and to working with women across the community to ensure their diverse range of needs are recognised and addressed,” Mr Stanhope said.

“The budget will support the work of the Office for Women, which was set up to raise the profile of this important area of policy-making and enhance the Government’s capacity to advance the interests of women. The office is taking a stronger role in working across government to ensure women’s issues are considered in the development of government policies, programs and services.

“The office will have a key role in the development of a centralised strategic approach, providing a framework to enable data collection, the identification of gaps and duplication, the establishment of performance measurement and reporting mechanisms and the focusing of priorities.”

The Chief Minister said that many of the health initiatives in the budget would be of real benefit to women.

“The Government recognises that women and their children are major users of health services. The responsibility of caring for people who are sick or who have a disability also falls most heavily on women,” Mr Stanhope said.

“The Government committed in the lead-up to the election to developing a step down facility to assist the return to home of patients with special convalescent needs. Step down facilities are particularly important to women as they are so often the primary carer.

“We are providing \$2.49 million over four years for a convalescent care service to support people following an acute hospital episode. This step down facility will address an identified gap in the provision of health and support services for the community.

“In addition, we will spend \$4.568 million over four years on enhancing all areas of respite care.

“We committed in the election to responding to growing demand for midwifery services, and the budget provides \$412,000 over four years for extending the Canberra midwifery program, providing for an additional 60 patients. The program gives women a greater range of choices during their pregnancy and at the time of giving birth.

Media Release



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“\$416,000 will be provided over four years for the Parentlink Program, replacing the sponsorship that was previously provided by NRMA. This will be of particular assistance to women with young children. The program provides connections for parents to a broad range of services such as delivering parenting advice and guidance to the needs of special groups, including parents of children with disabilities, working parents. Parents are provided with increased opportunities to build confidence and enhance skills by linking parents with information, guidance and support services in the community.

“\$426,000 over four years will provide ten emergency childcare places to assist the most vulnerable families to access short-term childcare in times of family emergencies or crisis, and complements early intervention services that exist already.”

The Chief Minister said the Government recognised that public housing policies must address the needs of women, particularly those escaping violence and those with dependent children.

“Under the Community Linkages Program, the YWCA has been funded for three community development workers to improve public housing tenants’ access to services. As part of this program, we will fund a series of community development initiatives, including projects to assist public housing tenants to access family support services,” he said.

“The Older Women’s Boarding House will provide eight independent living units for women aged 55 and over who have experienced family breakdown or elder abuse and who have exited a supported accommodation assistance program (SAAP) service. There is an emerging need among older women for safe and affordable accommodation, and only limited options available.”

The Chief Minister said the budget also takes steps towards addressing the current inequitable funding levels for women’s sport.

“Funding to the ACT’s champion women’s elite teams will be increased this year, from \$110,000 to \$180,000, with the Canberra Capitals Basketball team receiving \$100,000, and the Canberra Strikers Hockey team and the Canberra Eclipse Soccer Team receiving \$40,000 each,” he said.

“Individual sportswomen and women’s sporting teams are often faced with difficulties in achieving recognition, media coverage, funding and sponsorship. The increase in funding to elite teams, in conjunction with the funding incentives we’ve introduced for licensed clubs to make donations to women’s sport, go some way in addressing some of these difficulties.”

Statement ends 25 June 2002