



ACT Government

Improving Community Safety in Canberra

ACT Budget 2001-02

Embargoed until 1 May 2001

The 2001-02 Budget provides funding for significant initiatives to improve community safety in Canberra with **extra police, fire officers, paramedics and improved streetlighting** some of the highlights, ACT Urban Services Minister Brendan Smyth said.

Together, initiatives in the Budget are aimed at further reducing the levels of crime being experienced in the ACT and improving public safety in the Canberra community.

The 2001-02 Budget funding includes:

- \$1.057 million for **additional ambulance paramedics**;
- \$851,000 in **additional funding to the ACT Fire Brigade**;
- \$90,000 for a **dedicated volunteer support officer** for the ACT Bushfire Service and ACT Emergency Service;
- \$1.095 million for **10 additional police officers for Gungahlin**;
- \$500,000 for **increased police task force capacity**;
- \$1.445 million for **maintenance of the ACT Police Budget in real terms**; and
- \$500,000 in additional funding for **improved streetlighting** in older suburbs and areas experiencing high crime.

"The ACT Government has been working continually to improve ambulance response times in the ACT and we now have the quickest response times in the nation," Mr Smyth said.

"To maintain these high standards of response and to improve area specific response times, we are committing an additional \$1.057m for extra ambulance paramedics.

"Additional funding will be provided to the ACT Fire Brigade for maintaining high levels of fire responses to all areas of Canberra. The \$851,000 in funding will provide for a revised organisational structure, recruitment, a range of occupational health and safety issues and training and staff development for the ACT Fire Brigade.

"Volunteers provide a valuable contribution to emergency services in the ACT and region. They provide unpaid assistance in the form of time, skills and services to both the ACT Bushfire Service and ACT Emergency Services. Meeting the challenge of keeping volunteers motivated, trained, as well as recruiting and retaining volunteers requires ongoing liaison.

"To meet this need, \$90,000 will be available for a dedicated volunteer support officer to support the recruitment and retention of volunteers in the ACT Bushfire Service and ACT Emergency Service. The program will aim to provide innovative approaches to ensure that appropriate training and skills development are provided and maintained to our volunteers.

"The ACT 2001-02 Budget also continues the ACT Government's commitment to emergency services in the ACT through the development of Joint Emergency Services Centres. Forward design for the Belconnen Joint Emergency Services Centre (\$350,000) at the Winchester Centre in Belconnen and a Joint Emergency Services Training Facility (460,000) will occur in 2001-02.

"These facilities will allow the co-location of police, ambulance and fire brigade services, and to provide adequate and ongoing training for all emergency services personnel. A Joint Emergency Services Centre at Charnwood, with \$801, 000 allocated in the Budget, will provide for the upgrade of the existing West Belconnen Fire Station and construction of ambulance facilities.

"I am also pleased to announce that \$1.095 will be provided to ACT Policing each year over the next four years for 10 additional police officers for the Gungahlin region," Mr Smyth said.

"Gungahlin has grown to a population of 20,000 and remains one of the fastest growing urban centres in Australia. As such, Gungahlin is now facing increased demand for police services and expanded police patrols. The ten additional officers will be part of the North District and will concentrate on the Gungahlin region, providing a continued police presence to reduce crime.

"Looking more broadly across the ACT, an extra \$500,000 will be provided for increased Police task force capacity to help to reduce the impact of crime on the community.

"ACT Policing has identified a strong need for enhancing liaison with members of the public who are victims of serious crimes like assault or major property related offences such as burglary, motor vehicle theft and general theft. This team will also provide an interface for persons involved in serious motor vehicle accidents.

\$1.445 million will also be provided for maintenance of the ACT Police Budget in real terms.

The ACT Government is also providing an additional \$500,000 funding in this Budget for street lighting, including the installation of cabling and new globes. It will target a number of areas that require upgraded street lighting, including some of Canberra's older suburbs," Mr Smyth said.

"We will also be targeting areas that are experiencing crime, and improving the lighting in those areas. The ACT Government launched the Crime Prevention and Urban Design Manual in June 2000, with a key principle being the improvement of lighting in laneways and streets.

"While a lack of lighting does not cause crime, it can increase opportunities for crime, which is why it is so important to get it right. As part of an integrated crime prevention strategy, safer design, such as reliable lighting can assist in reducing crime and the fear of crime in our community.

"Through these new initiatives being funded in this Budget, and our existing programs currently being funded such as the targeted police strike teams for burglary and car theft, community beat police, and \$1.3 million Crime Prevention Fund, we will continue to place community safety and reducing crime in the ACT as a high priority."

Statement ends

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