BUDGET 2008 - 2009
READY FOR THE FUTURE
MEDIA RELEASE

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JUSTICE FOCUS IN 2008-09 BUDGET

Attorney General and Minister for Police and Emergency Services Simon Corbell today announced a major focus on justice in the ACT Budget to ensure that Canberra remains a safe city into the future.

"The Stanhope Government is making a substantial investment in our police and emergency services in the Territory, especially on facilities and equipment," Mr Corbell said.

The 2008-09 Budget initiatives include:

- $17.652 million over four years for the establishment of a police precinct at Belconnen through the construction of a new Police Station on vacant land at the Winchester Police Centre site;
- $2.184 million for the design, planning, specification and tender development for the refurbishment or construction of new facilities for the ACT Fire Brigade, ACT Ambulance Service, ACT Rural Fire Service and ACT State Emergency Service consistent with the Emergency Services Agency Station Relocation Feasibility Study (funded in the 2007-2008 Budget);
- $13.729 million over four years for the maintenance of frontline emergency response capability through the provision of 27 more response staff, secure storage for chemical, biological, radiological and other hazardous materials, regionalised biomedical safes and a mobile fleet service unit for maintenance of specialist emergency services vehicles at stations and incidents;
- $7.992 million over four years for the upgrade of the Civic Safety CCTV network and enhanced infrastructure protection for Manuka Oval and Exhibition Park in Canberra, the planning, design, development and installation of CCTV in the entertainment precincts of Manuka and Kingston, the construction of an appropriate monitoring facility at the Winchester Police Centre site, and recurrent funding for the project implementation team; and
- $840,000 for the ACT Fire Brigade to commence the replacement of, and perform maintenance on, the equipment previously supplied by the Commonwealth Government as part of a national Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear management program and Urban Search and Rescue Capability enhancement program.

"Our law courts, the administration of justice and the rehabilitation of prisoners have received generous allocation in the ACT Budget in recognition of their key role in the community," Mr Corbell said.

Funding provided over the next four years includes:

- $220,000 for a feasibility study to explore options for the replacement of the current 40-year old ACT Supreme Court with a modern facility to enable the court to continue

to discharge its important functions well into the future, including, by providing functional courtroom spaces, contemporary facilities for judges, jurors, staff and users of the court;

- $310,000 to replace the existing waterproof membrane and investigate the cause of excess groundwater build-up on the east side of the ACT's heritage-listed Supreme Court Building;
- $486,000 to increase the payments made to persons attending the Supreme Court for jury service through an increase in jury fees, establishment of a flat travel allowance and provision of lunch where service extends over a lunch period;
- $1.049 million for the modernisation of the ACT Supreme Court's existing case management system, preparing the courts' electronic platform to enable e-filing, online payments and eventually fully electronic trials, as well as updating the disaster recovery plan for the courts' information technology infrastructure in line with new generation technology;
- $1.354 million to replace the existing outdated Closed Circuit Television and video playback facilities in the ACT Law Courts and Tribunals with a new integrated electronic technology platform, including linking with remote witness facilities to support vulnerable witnesses and to better utilise the time of courts, professional and other witnesses, the police and the legal profession;
- $250,000 for a gap analysis and feasibility study of ways of connecting related criminal, court, corrections, victim and other information, currently held by different agencies in discrete business systems, to improve the provision of services across the justice sector;
- $206,000 for a new integrated victims' database maintained by Victim Support ACT to assist in ensuring commonality of information in regard to victims of crime and monitoring the continuity of service provision whether by managers of victims' cases before the courts or providers of therapeutic services; and
- $10.115 million over four years to fund several new programs for prisoners with a focus on the establishment of a therapeutic community and on planning for supported accommodation and employment/skills training, which are all in keeping with the rehabilitation focus that underpins the Alexander Maconochie Centre's planned operations;

"The ACT Government will spend $5.218 million on a feasibility study, design and construction of a new Forensic Medical Centre (FMC) for the Territory to replace the current outdated mortuary facility," Mr Corbell said.

"In addition to providing a modern, accessible purpose built centre, the relocation of the FMC from the existing site in Kingston is also compatible with the Kingston Foreshore Redevelopment."

Other Budget initiatives funded over the next four years through the Department of Justice and Community Safety include:

- $2.413 million to develop the technological support for a regulatory scheme to screen people who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. From 2009-10, a further $1.523 million will be provided over three years to administer the regulatory scheme, which will be developed during 2008-09 by the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services. These checks will assist in increasing the safety of vulnerable people in the ACT, to help avoid potential incidents of abuse and harm by people with whom they come into contact;
- $1.004 million for an additional two liquor inspectors to improve the liquor regulatory regime, which can assist in lessening alcohol related violence and anti-social behaviour;

- $984,000 for two additional professional staff for the Public Advocate ACT to allow that office to more adequately meet its increasing statutory guardianship responsibilities, both as guardian of last resort and emergency guardian, for vulnerable members of our community;
- $461,000 for the development of a replacement accident information management system that meets national, ACT Government and local business requirements for reliable Occupational Health and Safety, workers' compensation and injury prevention performance information;
- $140,000 for the replacement of 17 multi-bay parking meters with 9 'Pay and Display' ticket machines and upgrade of signage to reflect the introduction of ticket parking on Woolley Street in Dickson; and
- $50,000 for improvements to the online services of the Department of Justice and Community Safety.

Statement ends

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