



ACT Government

2005-2006 BUDGET

MEDIA RELEASE

BIG FACILITIES BOOST FOR LOCAL SPORT AND RECREATION

The 2005-06 ACT Budget is a boost for local sport and recreation facilities in particular, further demonstrating Government's commitment to provide the community with quality places to pursue their sport and recreational passions.

"Sport and recreation is integral to the fabric of the Canberra community. The *Canberra Social Plan* highlights our commitment to improving community health and well being, particularly through support and encouragement for life-long physical activity.

"This budget continues to deliver on this commitment. It provides significant funding for facility development and improvements that will have a flow on benefit for recreational opportunities, sports participation, and tourist visitation," said Treasurer and Minister for Sport Ted Quinlan.

"We have allocated \$1.7 million for the upgrade of Phillip Oval, or Football Park as it is commonly known, after Government assumed responsibility for the lease from local AFL in 2004. The facility is not in the best of nick at present so we have committed the necessary funds to improve the playing surface, amenities and spectator areas to a high standard.

"Phillip Oval is a key component of the Woden Town Centre Master Plan and an important facility for local AFL in particular. We understand this and know the upgrade will make the oval a facility that the community can be proud of and open the door for wider sporting and community use, in much the same way that Manuka Oval is presently used".

While Mr Quinlan noted that capital works funded for Manuka Oval in last year's budget to upgrade the fencing, improve spectator entrances and provide additional covered seating were well underway, the Budget had more good news in store for Manuka.

"Despite turning 75 last year, Manuka Oval remains a central part of Canberra's history and its sporting development. While pleasing to know that these capital works are on track and will be ready for the AFL match next month, we recognise that we need to make a stronger commitment to maintaining the facility for the future.

"The \$770,000 provided in 2005-06 brings the operational subsidy to the level identified in the facility's Business Plan and will also allow urgent maintenance works to be carried out, improving player and patron safety".

But the 2005-06 Budget is not only about improving our major enclosed ovals, with \$1.2 million allocated for the sportsground improvement program also.

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“Sporting fields across the ACT are the mainstay of grassroots sport, the launching pad for future champions and essential open spaces for community recreation,” Mr Quinlan said.

“Works funded in 2005-06 include the addition of lighting at Garran and Jerrabomberra Ovals, a canteen for the Latham neighbourhood oval, cricket practice nets at Lyneham and player change rooms at O’Connor. Additionally, this funding will also support an audit of irrigation systems and minor new works at many other grounds and several community pools.

“We have also committed \$200,000 to further progress the Lyneham Sport and Recreation Precinct and examine future options for a new home for the ACT Academy of Sport, while also allocating \$6 million over four years to develop Stromlo Forest Park for a number of sporting and recreation pursuits”.

Stromlo Forest Park, adjacent to the old Deek’s Forest that was devastated in the 2003 bushfires, will be a multi-use recreation park catering for runners, cyclists, mountain bikers and the wider community.

“The input of numerous stakeholders, including Rob de Castella and former Tour de France cyclist Stephen Hodge, has been paramount in the development of this project. The park will be a shot in the arm for the community and the many sporting groups that were directly impacted by the fire’s destruction of these forest plantations.

“Additionally, the Park will have benefits for sports-based tourism activities like the MONT 24-hour mountain bike race and the recently announced Brindabella Mountains Challenge that is being coordinated by Australian Capital Tourism and the cycling community”.

While facilities are a big winner from the Budget, community level programs will also be enhanced, with the annual Sport and Recreation Grants Program maintained at almost \$2.409 million and a further \$100,000 for the ground-breaking *Kids at Play* initiative.

“Since last October, Kids at Play has been a huge success in providing Canberra kids with enjoyable physical activities and demonstrating the importance of active play in maintaining health and well-being. Over this period the two colourful *Kids at Play* vans have conducted over 200 sessions involving in excess of 10,000 children.

“This added funding will get two new vans on the road, with more equipment and more staff so that the huge demand for this great program can be met.

“Sport and recreation is such a big part of Canberra’s identity – this Budget is another big leap forward in providing quality places for us to play and keeping us the *active capital*.”

Highlights

- **\$1.7m for the upgrade of Phillip Oval (“Football Park”) playing surface, player facilities and spectator amenities;**
- **\$1.1m for sports ground improvement program, including lighting at Garran and Jerrabomberra Ovals, a canteen at Latham, cricket practice nets at Lyneham and player change rooms at O’Connor;**
- **\$6m over four years for the Stromlo Forest Park development;**
- **\$770,000 at Manuka Oval for facility operations and required maintenance works;**
- **\$200,000 for the further progress of the Lyneham Sport and Recreation Precinct; and**
- **\$100,000 to double the capacity of the highly successful *Kids at Play* initiative.**