



ACT Government

2005-2006 BUDGET

MEDIA RELEASE

ACT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE — A BUDGET PRIORITY

The Stanhope Government has committed an extra \$20.4 million over four years for initiatives and services designed to care for and protect children and young people and to support Canberra families.

Minister for Children, Youth and Family Support, Katy Gallagher said the new funding announced today brings the total amount of funding committed since 2003-04 — and the release of the Vardon and Murray Reports — to \$139 million.

“The new funding announced today brings the annual budget for the care and protection of children and young people — through the Office of Children, Youth and Family Support — to \$70.9 million, up from \$65.6 million in 2004-05,” Ms Gallagher said.

“New Budget initiatives announced in the Budget today include:

- \$13.1 million over four years for individual support packages to care for and protect children and young people in care;
- \$1.4 million over four years to increase the number of security staff at the Quamby Youth Detention Centre, reducing the risk of young people re-offending, by providing a secure environment for young people in the facility; and
- \$2.9 million over four years to consolidate and expand the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit in the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support to enhance the Offices’ capacity to support young Indigenous people and their families and to develop a strategy to recruit more staff.
- \$1.6 million over four years to resource the new Child and Family Centre in Tuggeranong.

“The Budget will also provide \$1.5 million over four years — through the Department of Justice and Community Safety — to establish a Commissioner for Children and Young People responsible for promoting and protecting the interests of children and young people in the ACT.



“The 2005–06 Budget supports a range of strategic and operational initiatives that will be progressed during the 2005-06 financial year, to continue the reform of the protection system for children, young people and their carers.

The Children and Young People’s Act, will be reviewed and this will complement the ongoing implementation of the Government’s response to the *Territory as Parent Review* and *The Territory’s Children Report*.

“This includes responding to the increasing demand for statutory child protection intervention, as well as increasing the focus on services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and their families.”

Ms Gallagher said the Stanhope Government has made encouraging progress in attracting the number of frontline child protection staff. Since 2003-04, the ACT Government has provided funding for an additional 90 care and protection staff.

“These initiatives and actions — supported by considerable extra funding — are a fundamental expression of the Stanhope Government’s commitment to the reform of child care and protection in the Territory.”

Statement ends