



ACT Government
2004-2005 BUDGET

MEDIA RELEASE

**BUDGET ENCOURAGES FAMILY-FRIENDLY
WORKING CONDITIONS**

Treasurer Ted Quinlan today announced that the 2004-05 Budget will extend a payroll tax exemption to employers in respect to wages paid to ACT employees utilising paid maternity, adoption and/or primary care giver leave.

“Commencing 1 July 2005, employers who provide full-time and part-time paid maternity, adoption and/or primary care giver leave will be eligible for a payroll tax exemption. This exemption is for a maximum of 14 weeks and only applies to paid maternity, adoption and/or primary care giver leave,” said Mr Quinlan.

“This initiative sees the ACT leading Australia in encouraging family-friendly measures by supporting workers in the private sector who have newborn babies or adopted children,” he said.

“While Victoria has a similar scheme in place, it does not extend as far as the ACT scheme because it does not include primary care giver leave. Primary care giver leave recognises the responsibility of fathers, spouses, partners and other primary carers in the care of their newborn or adopted child.

“The ACT Public Service currently provides paid maternity and/or primary care giver leave for a maximum of 14 weeks. It is estimated that over 60 per cent of ACT private sector employees do not have access to paid maternity, adoption or primary care giver leave.

“The ACT Government is committed to improving the work/life balance of Canberrans. We recognise that employees are more satisfied in workplaces that demonstrate family-friendly initiatives and we understand that in many cases men and women will sometimes temporarily interrupt their careers to care for their children.

“It is hoped that this scheme will encourage private sector employers to provide similar leave arrangements to those available in the public sector.

“One of the themes of *The Canberra Plan* is to ‘Invest in our People’. By providing employers with a payroll tax exemption for wages paid to their ACT employees while on maternity, adoption or primary care giver leave, it is hoped that all ACT residents will enjoy a greater work/life balance,” said Mr Quinlan.

Statement Ends.