



ACT Government

2004-2005 BUDGET

MEDIA RELEASE

ACT BUDGET PROVIDES BETTER OUTCOMES FOR WOMEN

The 2004-05 Budget will continue to support Canberra women through a wide range of initiatives focusing on health and wellbeing.

“The ACT Government is committed to improving the status of women in the community and to working with women across the community to ensure their diverse range of needs are recognised and addressed,” Minister for Women Katy Gallagher said.

“Over the next four years \$400,000 will be allocated to a new Women’s Grant Program. The Program will focus on supporting women’s groups in the ACT to build capacity and strengthen their organisation’s effectiveness and contributions to the community.”

“\$40,000 will be allocated over four years to fund three scholarships a year for women to attend courses at the Australian Institute of Company Directors. The scholarships will enhance leadership skills and target women with disabilities, young and older women, ATSI women, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.”

“We have allocated \$110,000 in 2004-05 to upgrade facilities at the Women’s Health Service in response to identified areas of need. This work will improve accessibility for women with disabilities, address privacy issues for women from multicultural backgrounds who require the use of interpreters, and strengthen the security of the premises to ensure the safety of service users and staff.”

“The budget also extends a payroll tax exemption to employers in respect to wages paid to ACT employees utilising paid maternity, adoption and/or primary care giver leave. 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.”

Ms Gallagher said many of the health initiatives in the Budget will benefit women in the ACT.

“The ACT Government recognises that women and children are the main users of health services and that, in the main, women take primary responsibility for the care of people who are sick in their families and in the wider community,” she said.

“The ACT Government made an election commitment to provide additional Breast Care Nurses in the ACT. Over \$650,000 over four years will provide for enhanced support services for women diagnosed with breast cancer through specialist Breast Care Nurses. Research has shown that the use of specialised breast care nurses has resulted in increased patient



satisfaction with clinical management and a reduction in women suffering post-treatment psychological conditions.”

“\$793,000 over four years will go towards the Aboriginal Midwifery Access Program, which supports the provision of community-based antenatal and postnatal care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their babies. The Program is based at Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service.”

Meeting the needs of our children is also a key priority in this year’s budget. Women as primary care givers will benefit from support for children in this years budget.

“Developing our children’s potential is a key priority of the government. Through the Indigenous Early Childhood Support we will support Indigenous children’s development through increased participation in early childhood education at Koori Preschools. We are providing \$868,000 over four years to the program, which will enhance the social, emotional, literacy and numeracy development of Indigenous children from birth to six years of age.”

“\$602,000 over four years will extend the Newborn Hearing Screening Program currently operating at The Canberra Hospital to Calvary and John James Hospitals. The Program will provide hearing screening for all babies born at these hospitals to detect early signs of hearing abnormalities. With early intervention the overall health of infants with hearing impairment can be greatly improved.”

“In addition, a further \$939,000 over four years for the Promoting Health Students initiative will work to improve the health and fitness of school students across all ACT Government and non-government schools. Students will receive specialist nutrition and fitness education as well as in-school support.”

“\$288,000 over four years will provide for an after-hours roster of paediatric doctors, to deliver care to children at-risk. The program will provide a 24 hour medical service for children who may have suffered sexual or physical abuse and require immediate care.”

“This Budget delivers on our Canberra Plan commitments to Invest in our People and Build a Stronger Community. Through *Social Plan* objectives such as early intervention and quality health care for women children, and indeed, the whole community, The ACT Government is providing for the collective health and wellbeing of the entire community.”

Statement Ends.