



## A Caring Community

The Government is focussed on assisting people who are disadvantaged or experiencing a crisis. They may be refugees and migrants, people in urgent need of housing, families afflicted by domestic violence or parents seeking help to look after children with disabilities. Since 2001, the Government has invested heavily in services for vulnerable individuals and families. Protecting children at risk of abuse and neglect and strengthening services for people with disabilities have been high priorities and significant reforms have been achieved.

The Government has a proven record of investing in quality human services, such as its acclaimed Child and Family Centres.

### ACHIEVEMENTS

The Government is committed to supporting its most disadvantaged members of our community as shown through:

- an increase of 167 per cent in expenditure on the care and protection of children from 2001-02 to 2008-09;
- the Commonwealth Grants Commission assessment that the level of family and child services provided in the ACT is well over double the national average;
- an increase of 143 per cent in expenditure to support people with disabilities from 2001-02 to 2008-09;
- relief provided to people experiencing difficulty in paying their water or energy bills, through the Essential Services Council;
- increased expenditure of 135 per cent for mental health services from 2001-02 to 2008-09;

- the establishment of the Gungahlin and Tuggeranong Child and Family Centres at a cost of \$6 million, with an operational expenditure of \$2 million; and
- \$30 million over three years for additional public housing properties.

### ACT BUDGET 2008-09 – READY FOR THE FUTURE

The 2008-09 Budget further strengthens the Government's approach to services, focusing on the disadvantaged and those in need. Additional support is provided in this budget for:

- funding to assist children with developmental delays and explore options for special purpose facilities for people with severe disabilities. It will also provide a targeted intensive family support service to at-risk Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. Families in West Belconnen, particularly the disadvantaged, will also receive greater assistance;
- community infrastructure, including the establishment of an Arts Hub at Cook, a Health and Wellbeing Hub at Melrose and a Community Services Hub at Weston. Neighbourhood Halls will also be provided at these and six other regional locations;
- new community centre facilities at Forde, upgrades to the Belconnen Community Centre, planning for a new Child and Family Centre located in West Belconnen, the ACTION Gold Pass as part of the surrender your license initiative, and the extension of the eligibility for the water concessions to all Centrelink Health Care cardholders, Temporary Protection Visa holders and asylum seekers; and
- increasing the viability and capacity of non-government organisations, including seed funding to establish a portable long service scheme for the community sector.





# FACTSHEET No: 7

## ACT BUDGET 2008-09 INITIATIVES

INITIATIVE	WHAT DO THESE INITIATIVES DELIVER FOR THE FUTURE?
\$24.6 million over the next two years for the refurbishment of surplus schools.	The Government has committed to significant community infrastructure, responding to consultation on the future of former school sites. Initiatives will include an Arts Hub at Cook, a Health and Wellbeing Hub at Melrose and a Community Services Hub at Weston, as well as Neighbourhood Halls. This will provide much needed community space and revitalise the precincts.
\$608,000 to establish an Equipment Loan Service for children with development delays and disabilities aged 0-16 years.	This investment will provide equipment, which will significantly enhance functional outcomes and maximise the independence of children and young people. The equipment includes a variety of powered wheelchairs, complex mobility aids such as walking frames, seating systems and hoists.
\$3.6 million over four years to assist community organisations to strengthen capacity, sustainability and address disadvantage in the community.	This will assist community organisations that receive on-going ACT Government funding to maintain their viability and increase their capacity. It includes establishing a targeted grants scheme in 2008-09 and a portable long service leave scheme for the community sector in 2009-10.
\$250,000 to provide for the forward design for a third Child and Family Centre located in the Belconnen region.	The ACT currently has two highly successful Child and Family centres in Tuggeranong and Gungahlin. A third centre will provide Belconnen families with parenting and health advice and services.
\$2.5 million over four years to provide targeted, intensive family support services to at-risk Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families through an integrated service delivery model.	This will divert at-risk children away from the statutory care and protection system, reduce care and protection reports (and re-reports), improve access to services and improve family and child wellbeing.
\$4.1 million over four years to develop a regulatory system to screen people who work with vulnerable people, including children, young people and adults.	The introduction of this system will increase the safety of vulnerable people in the ACT and avoid potential incidents of abuse and harm by people with whom they come into contact. Individuals, organisations and volunteers who work with vulnerable people will be required to obtain a criminal check and background checks.
\$845,000 over four years to provide on-going support services in West Belconnen for disadvantaged families with children experiencing multiple and complex issues.	The initiative will establish support services for vulnerable families in West Belconnen and implement and evaluate models of effective intervention in the area.
\$416,000 over four years, to enhance funding to the Multicultural and the Multicultural Community Language Schools Grants programs.	The funding boost will contribute to sustainable communities and will assist in highlighting and promoting cultural diversity and social harmony in the ACT.
\$1.9 million over four years, to extend the eligibility for the ACT water concession to all Centrelink HealthCare cardholders, Temporary Protection Visas (TPV) holders and asylum seekers.	This will extend the eligibility for concessions and the level of rebate for water and sewerage under the ACT Concessions Program. The rebate currently applies to holders of a Centrelink Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran's Affairs Pensioner Concession Card and DVA Gold Card.
\$500,000 over four years, for the ACTION Gold Pass as part of the surrender your license initiative	Each year a number of older ACT drivers aged 75 years or older who surrender their driver's license. For many this can mean a loss of independence and mobility and restrict their participation in the community.
\$1 million to upgrade air-conditioning at the Belconnen Community Centre.	This investment will replace existing units, up-grade air-cooling plants and modify the circulation vents at the Centre.
\$352,000 to establish and fit-out the new community centre at Forde.	The centre will be used by the residents of Forde and surrounding suburbs and will foster the development of community groups and networks.
\$94,000 for a feasibility study to investigate on the accommodation needs of people with disabilities who have highly challenging behaviours.	A feasibility study for establishing facilities design for the accommodation needs of people with challenging violent behaviours, young people with chronic progressive neurological disabilities and people with long-term chronic disabilities.

# BUDGET 2008 - 2009

### Further information

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