



BUDGET 2008 - 2009 READY FOR THE FUTURE MEDIA RELEASE

No. 21

CONTINUING TO INVEST IN WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION

Minister for Education and Training Andrew Barr said the Stanhope Government's 2008-2009 Budget provides significant additional funding to continue to build a world-class education system that will ensure ACT students are ready for the future.

"The Stanhope Government is committed to high quality education and has backed this commitment with record investment in education," Mr Barr said.

"This year's Budget sees the Government invest additional recurrent funding in:

- literacy and numeracy support for students (\$977,000 over 4 years);
- support for teachers to help disadvantaged students (\$402,000 over 4 years);
- support for students with a disability (\$1.612 million over 4 years);
- quality teaching (\$2.378 million over 3 years);
- teacher leadership (\$421,000 over 2 years);
- support for early childhood schools (\$1.895 million over 4 years);
- extension of the ANU Secondary College (\$607,000 over 4 years);
- support for students at risk of dropping out of school (\$802,000 over 4 years);
- non-government schools (\$3.2 million over 4 years);
- consultation on the proposed Schools Standards Authority (\$116,000);
- vocational learning and careers in Colleges (\$3.4 million over 4 years);
- Australian apprenticeships (\$4.169 million over 4 years);
- carbon neutral schools (\$1.6 million);
- strengthening governance in the Department of Education (\$2.516 million over 4 years);
- responding to skills shortages (\$790,000 over 3 years); and
- support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families (joint initiative with DHCS - \$416,000 over 4 years).

"The ACT leads the nation, and in some cases the world, in educational outcomes and the Stanhope Government is committed to ensuring all Canberra students have access to high quality education.

"We know that the single biggest factor influencing a student's performance is the quality of teaching they receive and this Budget provides funding to enhance quality teaching and support teachers in the classroom and throughout their careers. It will also provide extra professional development for teachers.

"\$2.378 million will be invested in providing extra professional staff to help ACT schools adopt the NSW quality teaching model and almost \$1 million will be invested in targeted professional development for literacy and numeracy coordinators in all public schools to improve outcomes for students. Teachers who teach students who are socio-economically disadvantaged will receive support to develop more effective teaching practices that address

the effects of disadvantage on learning, such as literacy and numeracy. \$421,000 will be invested to enhance professional development for teachers in leadership positions.

“In addition to quality teaching, the Government wants to ensure schools are of a consistently high standard, both in the public and non-government sector. To this end, we have committed \$116,000 to advance consultation on the proposed Schools Standards Authority. We have also committed an extra \$3.2 million over four years for non-government schooling and \$2.516 million to enhance governance arrangements within the Department of Education and Training.”

Mr Barr said the Government is also funding additional support for students.

“Students with a disability in public and non-government schools will benefit from extra support to enhance their education and experience at school. Students at risk of dropping out will receive support through the SPICE Program which we have funded to the tune of \$802,000 through Volunteering ACT,” he said.

“Students in college and high school will benefit from dedicated teachers to help with their transition to college and with careers advice. These teachers will also be responsible for reviewing and enhancing VET programs.”

Mr Barr said in 2006 the Stanhope Government began the largest reform of ACT public education since self-government, and backed that reform with \$350 million for building new and upgrading all existing public schools - the largest ever investment in ACT public education.

“We are about half-way through that reform process and this year’s Budget builds on significant achievements,” Mr Barr said.

“This year’s capital budget sees funding for:

- Calwell High School performing arts centre (\$5 million);
- the redevelopment of the Erindale Leisure Centre (\$3 million);
- four new early Childhood Schools (\$3.5 million);
- the feasibility and design of Harrison High School (\$1.5 million);
- Fibre Optic Cabling to ACT Government schools (\$7.7 million); and
- additional musical instruments for schools (\$250,000).

“The extra \$7.7 million for a further rollout of fibre optic cabling will mean all ACT public primary school students will have access to high-speed internet and state of the art information and communication technology in the classroom. This takes the Government’s total investment to an extra \$27.7 million to ensure all ACT public school students have access to the most advanced internet access of any education system in Australia. This will include an on-line library to be shared by all schools and provide students and teachers access to podcasting, datacasting and video conferencing.

“As part of the ACT Government’s drive to re-vitalise physical activity in public schools, the Budget includes \$3 million to redevelop the Erindale Leisure Centre. The Centre is an important facility for Erindale College and the surrounding community. This package includes funds for the refurbishment of the pool including retiling, roof and ceiling rectification, refurbishment of the change rooms and replacement of associated plant and equipment. The ACT Government is also investing \$250,000 in the Children’s Physical Activity Foundation which will work to promote physical activity to children and assist schools to get students more active through grants for sporting equipment and the professional development of teachers.

“As part of the Stanhope Government’s commitment to education in the arts, the Budget provides \$5 million for a new Performing Arts Centre at Calwell High school. This investment will provide a modern performing arts facility to enhance performing arts education in the region. The Centre will also be a valuable facility for the whole Calwell community.

“In response to the high enrolments at the new Harrison Primary School and in view of accelerated land releases in Gungahlin, the ACT Budget provides \$1.5 million to bring the opening of Harrison High school forward by one year. This funding will see the commencement of design work to bring the opening of Harrison High School forward to 2012 as part of the Stanhope Government’s commitment to build schools where they are most needed.

“As part of the ACT Government’s commitment to ensuring young Canberrans get the best start in life this year’s Budget includes an extra \$3.5 million to build new preschool to year 2 schools at Southern Cross, Lyons, Isabella Plains and Narrabundah and provide upgrades for O’Connor Cooperative School. This investment is based on international research showing the importance of children receiving a quality education in their earliest years. The services provided within each of the schools will vary from site to site and will be available from a number of government and community agencies, including education, childcare, health, parenting, early intervention and preschool programs”

Mr Barr said the Stanhope Government’s massive and ongoing investment in education is only possible because of the ACT Government’s responsible financial management of the ACT economy.

“It’s important to manage the ACT economy and the ACT’s finances properly in order to ensure the Government is able to invest in the education and skills Canberrans and ACT business operators need to be ready for the future,” Mr Barr said.

Statement ends

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