



ACT Government

2002-2003 BUDGET

BUDGET 2002-03 – ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE OUTCOMES FOR ALL CANBERRANS

The 2002-03 Budget is evidence that the ACT Government is acting on its commitment to Canberra becoming a sustainable city.

ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope said sustainability was about preserving the things Canberrans love about the Territory and creating a legacy for future generations.

“Achieving true sustainability will require collaboration between government, industry sectors and the community,” Mr Stanhope said.

“Sustainability is about development that meets the needs of today’s generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

“Pursuing a sustainable future is about making decisions that fully integrate economic, social and environmental considerations.

“The recent establishment of the Office of Sustainability is a small but important step to achieving sustainable outcomes.

“The public transport and housing initiatives in this Budget are designed to achieve long-term sustainability for the community. Overall, the changes to transport in this Budget represent a range of incentives, such as improvement in access, cost and environmental efficiency and disincentives such as the introduction of paid parking in Belconnen and Tuggeranong, which together will deliver key environmental and social outcomes.

“The ACTION Bus Replacement Program is receiving \$17.2 million over five years which will go to purchasing gas-powered vehicles, with low floors to facilitate easier access for people with a disability and reduce pollution.

“\$2.2 million per annum over four years has also been provided for a simpler and fairer ACTION Bus flat fare structure that will make public transport more attractive to the community, and more accessible for low income earners.

“The introduction of paid parking is designed to act as a further incentive to promote public transport use.

“\$1.2 million over four years has been allocated to expanding community housing to offer a greater range of affordable housing models in the ACT.

“There is a strong focus on continuing to address waste issues in this Budget through the No Waste by 2010 Strategy and \$320,000 allocated for a waste pricing strategy that will assess the impact of a new pricing system that will encourage reuse and recycling.

Media Release



Released: 25 June 2002

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“There is also additional funding of \$373,000 in 2002-03 for rebates for householders who purchase solar hot water heaters, and \$1.5 million this year and over the next three years to develop an integrated nature conservation plan, species and community management and the establishment of the Environment ACT Community and Education Program.”

The Office of the Commissioner for the Environment has received extra funding of \$125,000 in 2002-03 to report on the state of the ACT environment.

“The Economic White Paper will set the strategic economic direction for Canberra, and will focus on the ACT’s areas of competitive strength in order to foster sustainable economic growth in the Territory,” Mr Stanhope said.

“Initiatives in the budget will foster sustainable economic growth such as the five year \$20 million package for the Information and Communication Technology Centre of Excellence.

“This is complemented by the investment we are making in the Territory’s intellectual capital by providing \$6 million in 2002-03 for the Knowledge Fund.”

The Canberra Spatial Plan will set a planning vision for the next 25 to 30 years. Budget 2002-03 allocates \$1.125 million over four years to deliver on the commitment to establish a strategic planning framework and a sustainable transport plan that will take account of transport, population growth, employment location, land availability, retail and leisure activity, ecological constraints and community and environmental values.

The Government is establishing an Expert Sustainability Reference Group to tap the extensive amount of expertise in this area of sustainability in Canberra. The Group will provide advice to government on a wide spectrum of sustainability issues.

“In general, Canberrans want a fairer and more tolerant community, a protected environment and a prosperous economy, and these initiatives are designed to work towards those goals,” Mr Stanhope said.

Statement ends 25 June 2002