



Minister for Education
with responsibility for:
Schooling
Vocational Training
Children's Youth and Family Services
Sport and Recreation

Bill Stefaniak MLA

Australian Capital Territory

Budget 2000-01
Department of Education
& Community Services

GOVERNMENT INSULATES FOSTER CARERS FROM ANY GST RISES

Youth and Family Services Minister Bill Stefaniak has announced the ACT 2000-01 Budget includes a significant initiative to compensate Canberra's foster carers for the effects of the Goods and Services Tax.

Mr Stefaniak said the Government places a very high value on the work of foster carers in supporting Canberra children who are not able to live with their own families, either for a short period or as a longer term option.

"These dedicated people are the backbone of our services to children in need of care. We must ensure that they are not disadvantaged by the addition of the GST to the day-to-day expenses that foster parents incur for the children in their care."

Mr Stefaniak said the major 2000-01 Budget initiative would allow for a **7% increase in foster carers' payments** from 1 July 2000.

The Minister said there were around 220 foster carers in the ACT, who were responsible for meeting a range of expenses, including food and shelter, heating, electricity, schools costs, outings and entertainment.

"Our funding commitment will provide those carers with a combined total increase of **\$110,000** for the 2000-01 financial year, to provide a 'buffer' for foster carers, to ensure they do not suffer any extra financial burden as a result of the introduction of the GST.

"With the introduction of the GST, there will be an increase in the cost of some living expenses. Due to the abolition of wholesale sales tax and other hidden taxes, it is expected there will be a small increase in some overall prices, while other prices will fall.

"The ACT Government wants to make sure that foster carers are covered for any additional expenses which may arise from the introduction of the GST."

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