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New community health centre for Belconnen

ACT Health Minister, Katy Gallagher, today announced that the 2009–10 ACT Budget included \$51.3 million for the forward design and construction of an Enhanced Community Health Centre (EHC) at Belconnen.

“Funding for health infrastructure in this year’s Budget includes the next allocation towards the ACT Government’s \$1 billion *Your health—Our priority* program to totally rebuild the ACT’s public health system,” Ms Gallagher said.

The Minister said an EHC would provide an increased number of ‘traditional’ community health services, such as dental, community nursing, and community mental health.

It would also provide an expanded range of higher order clinical services previously provided on hospital grounds, such as renal dialysis, some specialist outpatient services and chronic disease management.

“The ACT public health rebuild plan (Capital Asset Development Plan) proposed two EHCs for the Territory, one in the north and one in the south,” Ms Gallagher said.

“This initiative provides funding for the Belconnen EHC as a matter of priority to begin the process of establishing an alternate site for a number of hospital based services and to increase access to those services for North Canberra residents.

“The Government is committed to investing in health to create a strong, well resourced and responsive public health system, both in our hospitals and in the community,” she said.

Ms Gallagher said that in addition to an EHC, the Budget had provided \$2.1 million to refurbish an existing area at the Canberra Hospital for a new walk-in centre, another key 2008 election commitment.

“This walk-in centre will provide easy and quick access to medical care for people with minor illnesses or injuries.

“The aim is to reduce pressures on our emergency departments and our overworked ACT GP population by providing an alternative service for people with low level health needs.”

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