



# ACT Government

## 2004-2005 BUDGET

### MEDIA RELEASE

#### BUDGET DELIVERS ON SOCIAL PLAN COMMITMENTS

The ACT Government has delivered on the commitments it made in *Building Our Community – the Canberra Social Plan*, Chief Minister Jon Stanhope said today.

“In launching the *Social Plan*, I said that the challenge for our community and for our Government was to find and put in place new ways to plan, develop and manage the ACT – to create a place in which all people reach their potential, make a contribution and share the benefits of the community.

“The funding in this Budget, and the Third Appropriation, will help us meet this challenge.

“The five *Social Plan* flagships have been fully-funded with over \$73 million allocated over the next four years, on top of the \$5.8 million already provided through the 3<sup>rd</sup> Appropriation.

1. Funding of to help build a stronger community includes \$8.8 million for renewed community infrastructure and facilities, community networking grants program, reforming community sector funding, enhancing community events on New Year’s Eve, Australia Day and the Multicultural Festival and enhancing the way the government engages with the community.
2. \$5 million for increased concessions for families on low incomes to assist with energy, water and sewerage payments, with a new concession for gas charges.
3. A package of early intervention measures worth almost \$40 million to help care for our children and young people, including: increased support for child protection (\$25.6m); Indigenous assistance for hearing health, midwifery access, early childhood and student support, and foster care (\$4.6m); universal newborn hearing screening (\$600,000); combating childhood obesity and promoting healthy students (\$3m); increased funding for youth at risk (\$2.7m); increased payment to foster carers (\$1.5m) and supporting youth justice clients (\$1.9m).
4. \$11.4 million will also go towards establishing Child and Family Centres in Gungahlin and Tuggeranong. These Centres will be ‘one-stop shops’, modelled on the Lyons Bushfire Recovery Centre, providing local services with a focus on support and early intervention, including health, education, parenting and family support services.
5. \$8.5 million will be provided for a Community Inclusion Board and a Community Inclusion Fund. The Board will be a source of high level advice to the Government on social priorities. The Fund will assist the most vulnerable members of our community as part of a concerted attack on the causes of poverty and social exclusion.

“A priority of the *Social Plan* is to lead Australia in education and training. Over four years \$11.3 million will go towards ensuring that schools are resourced to deliver information and communication technology (ICT) skills to students.



“All students will receive a strong grounding in ICT, through a package consisting of a schools IT infrastructure fund, student digital pass-keys, schools’ website enhancement, technical computing support, non-Government schools support and TransACT connection to non-Government schools.

“In addition we will provide \$1.5 million over four years for a Training Pathway Guarantee, a safety net for school leavers. Some \$8 million will also go to Skilling ACT, an initiative developed to meet a sharply increased demand for apprenticeship and traineeship places in the ACT.

“The Budget also includes a large injection of capital funding to build the infrastructure necessary to meet our commitments under the *Social Plan*. \$110 million will go towards development and construction of an ACT prison at Hume, contributing to the *Social Plan* priority of ‘Respect, diversity and human rights’.

“Many local prisoners are currently being accommodated interstate, however with a new ACT prison, these men and women will soon be able to complete their sentencing and rehabilitation with the support of family and friends nearby.

“Some \$2.6 million has been set aside for a Multicultural Centre, \$1 million for a new community hall in Palmerston, more than \$10 million for a range of school refurbishment and upgrades, and over \$15 million for Kippax, Belconnen and Civic Libraries and the Civic Library and Link Project.”

The Chief Minister said that delivering on the commitments outlined in the *Social Plan* would go a long way towards realising the Government’s vision of creating a city in which all people reach their potential, make a contribution and share the benefits of the community.

“The 2004-05 budget delivers on the whole range of *Canberra Plan* themes by focusing on the immediate needs of the community, as well as the longer term needs of the ACT. Through this million commitment the ACT Government is ‘Investing in Our People’ and ‘Building a Stronger Community’,” said Mr Stanhope.

**Statement Ends.**