



ACT Government

2004-2005 BUDGET

MEDIA RELEASE

ACT BUDGET GIVES GREEN LIGHT TO BIG PLANS FOR NON-URBAN ACT

The ACT 2004-2005 Budget has committed more than \$16 million towards the ongoing recovery of Canberra's non-urban areas, Chief Minister Jon Stanhope said today.

Chief Minister Jon Stanhope said Canberrans had made it clear that a total, Territory-wide recovery was essential to put the trauma and tragedy of early 2003 behind them.

"Much of our precious non-urban areas were devastated in the January 2003 firestorm.

"We have conducted extensive consultation since the fires, which has reinforced the fact that the community treasures our rural and bush setting as a special and distinctive asset worthy of protection and resurrection.

"My Government shares this view and also strongly agrees with the community sentiment that non-urban ACT must not be left behind or forgotten in the recovery from the fires.

"It was for this reason that we commissioned and embarked upon the comprehensive non-urban study.

"We have now adopted the recommendations of the *Shaping Our Territory Final Report* and are committing several million dollars in this Budget to move ahead with post-bushfire development or redevelopment.

"I am particularly pleased that, through the Budget's Capital Works Program, \$10 million has been allocated to the development of a world-class arboretum or 'tree zoo' to the west of Lake Burley Griffin.

"The arboretum will become a significant new scientific and tourist attraction in its own right and is set to be another 'jewel' in Canberra's crown," said Mr Stanhope.

Other initiatives funded in the Budget include:

- \$1.4 million for the redevelopment of the Cotter, including new pathways and walking tracks, viewing platforms, upgrade of the Cotter camping grounds; and
- \$2.83 million for several projects at Tidbinbilla, including observation decks, homestead preservation, upgraded picnic areas and water circulation system, and a new adventure playground. This funding will also support the Corroboree Frog breeding program.
- \$3.25 million for the creation of a new and enhanced Stromlo/Deek's Forest Park.



This funding is in addition to the \$1.9 million allocated recently for non-urban Canberra in the Appropriation Bill No. 3

The Budget has also allocated more than \$2 million for sustainability studies, master planning and business planning and a series of national competitions to pave the way for the :

- Future development of the international arboretum near the Tuggeranong Parkway. The arboretum will make use of the existing historic plantations that survived the fire, and showcase different trees from across the world;
- Development of Stromlo/Deek's Forest Park as a significant recreation area;
- Restoration of the Cotter and Tidbinbilla areas; and
- The proposed return of new-look, sustainable and larger rural villages at Uriarra, Stromlo and Pierces Creek.

“Our expectation is that the ‘new’ Tidbinbilla Nature Park will see the area developed as a local native wildlife research and education destination. It will provide a focal point for scientific research and will again provide local, interstate and international visitors with opportunities to encounter wildlife in natural surroundings.

“The careful redevelopment of our bushfire-affected non-urban areas will also provide new recreational and tourism opportunities. Canberra’s involvement to date in nature-based tourism remains largely untapped,” the Chief Minister added.

The 2004-2005 Budget also commits nearly \$196,000 for design and preliminary site works associated with the first stages of the reconstruction of the popular Cotter Precinct.

“The Cotter was identified in the *Shaping our Territory Final Report* as a special place for many Canberrans and it will be developed appropriately as a recreational hub, offering enhanced family recreation within a natural environment setting. In this context, there will also be some limited commercial development opportunity.”

The Budget also commits \$40 million over five years for the revegetation and reconstruction of Canberra’s bushland and forest areas which were destroyed in the fires.

Statement Ends