



ACT Government

2003-2004 BUDGET

BUILDING OUR CITY, BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY

The 2003-04 ACT Budget builds our city and builds our community, Chief Minister Jon Stanhope said.

“My Government is committed to ensuring we have a prosperous, equitable and sustainable city for all Canberrans, now and into the future,” he said.

“The work we have been doing on the Economic White Paper, Spatial Plan and Social Plan, our integrated long term strategies for Canberra, provides us with the foundations for building our city and our community, and this budget addresses areas that we know to be priorities of these plans.”

Building Our City

The Chief Minister said the budget progresses many of the Government’s priorities for building our city’s physical infrastructure and transport systems in a sustainable way.

“Our \$105 million new capital works program funds major infrastructure projects and upgrades to essential community facilities. For example, we are building a new joint Emergency Services Centre in Belconnen, replacing the current Kippax Library with a permanent library, and we will be making neighbourhood improvements in Braddon, Deakin, Lyneham, O’Connor and Turner. We have also made a \$40 million planning provision in 2004-05 for planning and construction of a new or upgraded convention centre.

“We are putting \$13.2 million into improvements of the ACT’s road and cyclepath network, and \$500,000 for improving safety in playgrounds. We are also continuing the upgrade program of our sportsgrounds, pools and recreation facilities, with \$1.85 million.

“We are providing \$2.5 million in the budget to start implementation of the first phase of our Sustainable Transport Plan, which aims to shift the balance of travel from single-person private vehicle trips towards greater use of public transport, cycling, walking and multi-person vehicle trips. In this budget we are also providing nearly \$3 million over four years to enhance bus services in Amaroo and Yerrabi in Gungahlin.

“In addition, we are providing \$1.5 million over four years for developing a strategic plan focusing on building the viability and vitality of Canberra’s city centre, creating a strong economic, and cultural focus for Canberra and the region.”

Mr Stanhope said the budget supports the work of the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce in rebuilding our city, with \$17 million for bushfire recovery in 2003-04.



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Inquiries: Penny Farnsworth: 6205 0434(w) 6282 4347(h) 0417 481 407(m)

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“We are putting \$6 million into restoring the ACT’s urban, environmental and heritage assets after the bushfires. For example, we will be restoring walking trails and repairing previously undisturbed land that was damaged when fire suppression trails were cut through it as part of the fire-fighting efforts,” he said.

“We will also be replacing urban landscape assets like street and parkland trees, shrub beds, street signs and bus shelters. We are also providing \$8.8 million for the purchase of land to replace public housing properties lost in the fires.

“Beyond bushfire recovery, the budget also funds initiatives towards achieving a sustainable environment for the ACT, with initiatives such as a subsidy scheme for replacing polluting wood heaters with cleaner forms of heating, and for conservation, restoration and construction works along the Murrumbidgee River corridor and catchment. These initiatives will preserve air quality and freshwater resources.

“The budget also funds the restoration of woodlands in habitats previously cleared of trees, enhancing the conservation value of remnant woodlands in rural areas.”

Building Our Community

Mr Stanhope said the budget provides substantial support for building the Canberra community.

“My Government is committed to building our community to ensure all Canberrans can reach their full potential. In this budget, we are providing significant extra funding into areas such as education, health, disability services and affordable housing, and we are continuing to enrich cultural life in Canberra,” he said.

“A well-educated community is the basis of what makes Canberra socially and economically healthy. Education is a key investment in our future.

“We have again increased public investment in education, with a further \$7.4 million in 2003-04. This will support a youth worker in every government high school, a curriculum renewal program and improvements to career guidance in schools. Additional funding is being provided for the non-schooling sector, for preschools, and for the Schools Equity Fund, which will support schools with a high concentration of students from low socio economic backgrounds and from at risk families.

“Quality health services are also an essential part of any society. This budget builds our health services, with an extra \$18.8 million for health initiatives next financial year.

“This funding will help us meet extra demands emergency departments and minimise the incidence of and spread of infectious diseases. We are also acting to reduce surgical waiting lists at Calvary Public Hospital, and to improve paediatric services at The Canberra Hospital. Funding is being boosted for renal dialysis services, mental health services, drug and alcohol programs and for the Home and Community Care program, which supports people with a disability, frail older people and their carers.

“We are putting an extra \$6.861 million over four years into services for people with a disability. The new initiatives will address unmet needs, enhance allied health services for post-school aged adolescents and adults with disabilities, and provide an economic incentive to encourage drivers of wheelchair accessible taxis to give priority to people in wheelchairs.”

Mr Stanhope said the budget addresses key issues of housing affordability and homelessness.

“Access to safe affordable housing is a right of everyone in the community,” he said.

“We are providing \$13.37 million over four years to confront the problem of homelessness and another \$3 million in 2003-04 for affordable housing initiatives. This is in addition to the funding going into rebuilding our public housing stock lost during the bushfires.

“To help meet the increasing demand for residential land in Canberra, the Government is releasing land for 2400 new residences, based on population growth and household formation.”

Mr Stanhope said the arts play a key role in the ACT Government’s vision of Canberra as an inclusive, prosperous, skilled and creative society, and that the budget funds a range of new initiatives and ongoing projects to enrich and enhance cultural life in the ACT.

“We will be making improvements to the Canberra Museum and Gallery, the Canberra Theatre and other arts venues, as well as restoring heritage sites. We will be doing studies into a performing arts precinct in Civic West and into the use of existing arts facilities on the northside and Belconnen and the need for future facilities,” he said.

The Chief Minister said that in order to build our city and our community, it is necessary to have a healthy economy, and that the budget builds the economy with funding for business attraction, growing local businesses, smart technologies and expanding the ACT’s education and tourism industries.

“For example, we will be establishing a not-for-profit business attraction organisation, Partners Canberra, to provide a one-stop-shop for companies and individuals here and overseas to make the investment and relocation decisions. We are also extending our current suite of programs for small and micro businesses, which ultimately will lead to jobs growth in the sector. A new Council of Education Export will work to develop the ACT as a university and further education centre,” he said.

“This is in addition to the significant support for Canberra’s convention and tourism industries, with the \$40 million funding for the convention centre and \$4 million for the V8 Supercar race being redirected towards an integrated marketing and promotional program for the ACT and region.

“This budget in its entirety progresses the Government’s vision of building our city as a strong, confident and prosperous community asserting its place in the country’s affairs as the national capital.”

Statement ends.