



ACT Government

Supporting Canberra's Multicultural Communities

Embargoed until 1 May 2001

The 2001-2002 ACT Budget continues to build on this Government's strong support for Canberra's multicultural communities, ACT Chief Minister and Community Affairs Minister Gary Humphries said.

"This budget provides practical support to Canberra's multicultural communities, while at the same time allocating funding towards developing a greater understanding of their needs," Mr Humphries said.

"22% of Canberrans were born overseas. Canberra has a well-justified reputation as a great multicultural city, and this is complemented by a unique level of acceptance and racial tolerance," Mr Humphries said.

"Multiculturalism, cultural harmony and community development will be advanced through the **doubling of funding for the Multicultural Grants Program to \$100,000 a year**. The program provides much valued assistance to community groups for a wide range of community projects, including participation in the National Multicultural Festival.

"In addition, \$100,000 has been provided to establish a **demographic profile of the ACT's Indigenous and multicultural communities**. This data will ensure that the government has reliable and consistent information with which to develop and deliver services to these communities.

"We are currently developing a **Framework for a Multicultural ACT** to provide a whole-of-government focus on multiculturalism. The Framework sets out the ACT Government's guiding principles for multiculturalism, together with specific actions to be undertaken during 2001-2002. This Framework will be launched on 8 May."

This budget directs resources towards a number of the Multicultural Framework's actions, including:

- a four year \$2.1 million **sexual health program**, part of which will provide funding for a sexual assault service to the multicultural community, and the establishment of a sexual health outreach worker;
- support for multicultural community groups by providing **subsidised accommodation for language classes and cultural purposes**;
- providing **sessions on cultural sensitivity** for ACT Government staff;
- providing a **handbook combating racism for teachers and staff** to address and resolve complaints of racism in schools and the workplace;

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- undertaking a feasibility study on the development of an **ACT Multicultural Resource Centre** to house the Migrant Resource Centre, The ACT Multicultural Council, The Ethnic Schools Association and to provide a venue for new and emerging communities that do not have their own premises; and
- finalising a **Community Relations Plan** in 2001-2002 as an integral part of the management of cultural diversity and to promote and foster an increasingly positive community relations environment in the ACT.

"There are over 150 countries represented in Canberra's population, with over 100 different languages spoken in the ACT. The additional money made available in this budget is money well spent," Mr Humphries said.

Statement ends

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