



Kate Carnell MLA

Chief Minister

Australian Capital
Territory

\$18m TO PUT THE CLEVER CAPITAL ONLINE

The ACT Government has provided \$18 million in the 2000-2001 Budget for a series of initiatives that will put most government transactions and information online within the next two years.

ACT Chief Minister Kate Carnell said the proposed funding will result in improved, faster services to Canberrans across health, education, business and local government services, and will also ensure the Territory remains at the forefront of electronic service delivery in Australia.

"An estimated four-in-five adult Canberrans use a computer regularly, and 53 per cent of our adult population access the Internet either at work or from home. This is the highest proportion of any state or territory," Mrs Carnell said.

"There is no doubt that electronic services are the way of the future. My recent technology tour in the United States, Canada and the UK confirmed that governments across the world have realised that to succeed in the new millennium, they need to serve their customers electronically. Electronic services offer people faster access to government services anywhere, any time, providing them with greater choice and convenience."

The Chief Minister said that government agencies will be required to submit rigorous business cases to Cabinet before expenditure will be approved. These business cases will need to clearly demonstrate the benefits that the projects would offer to the community.

"ACT Government agencies are working hard to get transactions online. For example, the **Department of Urban Services** currently offers a number of transactions online, including the ability to pay rates and land tax, to lodge enquiries regarding lease conveyancing, and to apply for a number of trade licences," Mrs Carnell said.

"Some of the online services planned include dog registrations and firewood collection permits. Further down the track we'll see transactions relating to public housing."

Mrs Carnell said the government will also explore plans for a **Health Information Network** to enable faster and more accurate exchange of data between health service providers.

"This network would use the government's unique customer identifier, the Patient Master Index, and is a significant element in the establishment of an integrated health care system. The transfer of any health information would, of course, be managed in a way to ensure appropriate confidentiality and security," Mrs Carnell said.

She said ideas currently under consideration include transfer of hospital admission and discharge notifications; accident and emergency attendance notifications to GPs; medication notification

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exchanges between GPs and hospitals, and vice versa; and requests for ACT Pathology service and the receipt of results.

"No longer will health providers and patients need to wait for a telephone call or for a report to be posted or couriered over to receive relevant information. It will be delivered quickly and accurately via the health information network.

"The network's smart technology will also reduce the need for health providers to re-key or duplicate information, which will mean reports can be produced very quickly. This will ultimately lead to integrated patient records, more timely decisions and most importantly, improved health care."

Mrs Carnell said another proposal for funding involved the expansion of the highly successful **Business Gateway Internet site**.

"Business Gateway currently provides access to a range of information, including advice on starting a business, links to other business-related sites, and information and applications related to numerous business licences.

"The site has had over 130,000 pages downloaded since its launch in July 1999, with hundreds of information packages completed or requested online."

"Business Gateway will be made even more useful and easier to use, moving it towards achieving the ACT Government's commitment to reduce the regulatory burden on businesses."

Mrs Carnell said the **Education Department** was also looking to enhance our reputation as the 'clever capital' by continuing to invest in our children.

"This government has already made a major investment in information technology for schools, and we aim to capitalise on this investment by expanding the range of on-line course content available to schools.

"The demand for on-line course materials is growing with on-line content in science scheduled to become available in time for the 2001 school year. Other educational initiatives being considered include on-line enrolment and smart card arrangements for CIT students."

Mrs Carnell said the ACT Government will also consider a proposal for an electronic document management system for the **ACT Public Service**.

"In order to be the 'clever capital', we must have a clever public service. The proposed electronic management system will initially focus on managing the creation, sharing and storage of documents, greatly increasing the ability and speed at which staff can search for, access and use information.

"Ultimately, this system will facilitate rapid publication of government information on our website and will also allow the community to complete government forms online."



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Further information:

Geoff Harris

(02) 6205 0013 - office

(0417) 425 579 - mobile