



23 May 2000

ACT Budget 2000
Health Portfolio 02

m e d i a r e l e a s e

\$62million reserved to ensure a Healthy Future

The ACT health system will receive significant new public funding to assure the provision of services to meet the growing health demands of the community, ACT Health Minister Michael Moore announced today.

The funding comes against the backdrop of a continuing growth in demand for health services across Australia. Costs of health provision are also increasing in real terms in many areas.

In addition, the ACT's population profile is changing over time from a relatively young profile to a more typically Australian mix, making us the most rapidly ageing jurisdiction. With this ageing profile comes increasing need for services.

To recognise these pressures, the ACT Government has injected new funding into the health portfolio of **\$8.848 million** in 2000-01, and totalling **\$62.9million over 4 years**.

Growth in Needs (total pool)	2000-01 (\$'000)	2001-02 (\$'000)	2002-03 (\$'000)	2003-04 (\$'000)
Expenditure	8 848	13 004	17 282	23 795

—ref: Budget Paper 3 – Budget Initiatives – A healthy, safe, diverse and contributing community - Growth in Needs (unallocated), together with 6 listed initiatives

"\$62million for our public health system is a major injection of funding, and it demonstrates this Government's strong commitment to our healthy community," the Minister said.

"Importantly, the flexibility of the growth funding means that we can react to emerging cost problems, initiate new service programs, and fund reforms towards primary health care.

"This Growth Needs funding means that the Government has fire-walled our community's health services against the financial shocks felt in other jurisdictions.

"Our community knows that our health system is the best in Australia for quality and access, and they want the ACT Government to maintain that performance. Through today's Budget the Government is doing exactly that," he said.

The bulk of the Growth Needs funds have not yet been allocated. This funding will be used to expand existing activity and launch initiatives across the ACT health services system, including

the public hospitals, ACT Community Care, and non-government health providers. Some funds may be allocated in the finalisation of purchase agreements with ACT government agencies.

- Unallocated 'Growth Needs' funds \$7,657,000 (\$58.1 million over 4 years)

\$1.191 million of the funds for the 2000-01 year (and \$4.7m over 4 years) have been allocated to measures announced today, as the following table shows:

- Increases in funding for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service \$636,000 (\$2.4 million over 4 years)
- Funding for support accommodation for Dual Diagnosis clients \$200,000 (\$824,000 over 4 years)
- Additional funding for Indigenous Health services \$100,000 (\$418,000 over 4 years)
- 100 additional methadone places \$125,000 (\$518,000 over 4 years)
- Domiciliary Oxygen Scheme \$80,000 (\$332,000 over 4 years)
- Funding for Mental Health Official Visitors \$50,000 (\$204,000 over 4 years)

—ref: Budget Paper 3 – Budget Initiatives – A healthy, safe, diverse and contributing community -

Further detail of the allocated initiatives is given below.

Child and Adolescent mental health funding increase

* This measure is fully explained in a separate media release issued today.

Support accommodation for 'Dual Diagnosis' clients

This innovative service will fill a gap between services for a significant number of people with dual diagnoses of both intellectual handicap and a mental illness or mental health condition. It will assist in providing long-term accommodation support involving joint service delivery between Mental Health Services and the Disability Program. The service recognises the need for, and provides, medium- to long-term support for people who have high and complex needs.

Indigenous health funding increase

* This measure is fully explained in a separate media release issued today.

Extra Methadone places

The ACT methadone program will be expanded from 600 to 700 places in the 2000-2001 financial year.

ACT methadone provision is currently managed through a combination of public and community schemes. Assessment and stabilisation is provided through public clinics, with three forms of ongoing prescribing and dosing:

- public clinic;
- GP prescribing and community pharmacy dosing; and
- public prescribing and community pharmacy dosing.

The planned expansion will occur through an extension of the current third stream in which clients are assessed and stabilised by the public clinic doctors and commence dosing at a community pharmacy at the start of their treatment. This requires a high level of training for the community pharmacists involved and has proven to be a very effective mode of treatment so far. The new places will be full fee paying at \$30 per client per week.

Expansion to the Domiciliary Oxygen Scheme

There is a current Domiciliary Oxygen Scheme run by ACT Community Care which provides oxygen in the home. The new funding will further assist pensioners to improve their quality of life, by enabling older people to receive continuous oxygen via portable oxygen bottles outside their homes.

Mental Health Official Visitors

This initiative provides funding for Mental Health Official Visitors.

Under the *Mental Health (Treatment and Care) Act*, Mental Health Official Visitors will be responsible for visiting mental health facilities to ensure that appropriate standards in treatment and care are met and that the rights and dignity of people who receive treatment and care at such facilities are protected.

The positions will be independent of service providers and will report directly to the Minister.

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