



ACT Government  
**2005-2006 BUDGET**

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**STANHOPE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES \$8M CONCESSIONS INCREASE**

The Stanhope Government is to boost funding to the ACT Concessions Program administered through the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services.

The ACT Concessions Program provides rebates to people who are financially disadvantaged, pensioners and Commonwealth Health Care cardholders, on a range of essential services.

The Minister for Disability, Housing and Community Services, John Hargreaves said almost \$8 million would be provided over four years — \$1.954 million in the 2005-06 financial year — to meet the increasing cost of services and growing numbers of people accessing concessions.

This is in addition to the \$21.5 million provided annually in concessions administered by the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services to eligible Canberrans.

“According to the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services the ACT already provides the highest level of concessions in Australia for essential services in Australia,” Mr Hargreaves said.

“Concessions in the ACT generally are available on items and services that include energy (gas and electricity), water and sewerage, spectacles, bus travel, motor vehicle registration and licences, and general rates, with varying criteria applying to each type of concession.

“Concession costs have been generally rising and there is an upward trend in the number of people becoming eligible for concessions.

“This is due to factors such as an ageing population and increased knowledge of entitlements within the target population.

“Last year the Stanhope Government introduced a new annual Energy concession that was \$20 higher than previously.

Mr Hargreaves said the concessions greatly assist lower income families and pensioners in making ends meet.

For example:

- Holders of an ACT Senior's Card can receive a \$35 subsidy towards the cost of spectacles every two years. ACT holders of a Centrelink Health Care Card (HCC), Pensioner Concession Card (PCC) and Veteran's Affairs Pensioner Concession Card (DVA) are eligible for concessions on a range of prescription items after making a co-payment of \$22 per prescription.
- An energy rebate up to \$189 is provided to ACT residents in receipt of an HHC, PCC and or DVA pension or DVA Gold Card.
- Holders of a PCC, HCC and DVA receive a 50% concession on bus travel as well.
- A General Rate rebate for holders of a PCC, PVA Pension Card or Gold Card is provided to a maximum of \$365 per property.

**Statement ends**