



# ACT Government

## 2004-2005 BUDGET

### MEDIA RELEASE

#### ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Traineeship programs announced in the ACT Budget 2004-05 are further evidence of the Government's enduring dedication to improving employment and educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Chief Minister and Minister for the Environment said today.

The Government today announced its intention to extend employment opportunities for Aboriginal people by providing \$685,000 over four years for traineeships within Environment ACT.

"This Government was elected on a platform that acknowledged the right to self-determination for Aboriginal people and the importance of working in partnership with Aboriginal communities.

"One area where this is particularly important is the joint management of natural land resources, which have a special significance to the local Indigenous communities.

"This initiative builds on a successful land and natural resource management pilot study in 2002 and will provide funding for two Aboriginal traineeships within Environment ACT in 2004-05," said Mr Stanhope.

The pilot program employed three trainees and will cease at the end of 2004. The graduates from this program will complete the traineeship having obtained important skills for the future.

The program beginning in 2004-05 will provide for traineeships of two years and will include both formal study and 'on-the-job' training. The recruitment process will include a representative from the Ngunnawal community on the selection panel.

"The Government recognises that true reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians will only be achieved through effective partnerships such as the joint management arrangements for Namadgi National Park.

"These traineeships will help ensure members of the Aboriginal community are able to acquire the skills to work with the government land managers as equal partners, while also enabling the trainees the share their skills and values with government land managers.

"The Government recognises the Aboriginal people as the original occupants of this land, and that the land and its waters were settled as colonies without treaty or consent. While we cannot change what has occurred in the past, we can ensure that our future management of these precious resources is on the basis of a strong partnership and in keeping with shared values," said Mr Stanhope.

The Chief Minister said the traineeship programs formed part of the largest investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community initiatives since self-government.

**Statement Ends**

