



ACT Government

2003-2004 BUDGET

\$13 MILLION FOR HOMELESSNESS

The Stanhope Government is to provide \$13.4 million over four years to confront the issue of homelessness in the ACT.

The Minister for Disability, Housing and Community Services, Bill Wood said the 2003/04 Budget would target key priority areas identified in the *Needs Analysis of Homelessness in the ACT* and the Standing Committee Report on *Accommodation and Support Services for Homeless Fathers and their Children*.

“A total of \$2.4 million will be expended in 2003/04 to support homeless families, men and couples,” Mr Wood said.

“In the next two years this money will provide crisis and transitional accommodation, as well as support for more than 90 families, 90 men and 12 couples.

“The initiatives funded will assist in addressing the root causes of homelessness, not just its symptoms. They seek sustainable solutions to the problem by assisting people to gain independent living skills and reducing the likelihood of reoccurring homelessness.

“Homelessness is an incredibly complex issue, for which there are many causes. It does not just affect middle-aged unemployed men, as the myth would suggest.

“To this end the Government is increasing the volume of support services available to people in crisis, breaking an often life-long, or even intergenerational cycle of homelessness and poverty.

“These initiatives would enable the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) to be better placed to respond to homelessness.

“The Budget will result in an increase in supported accommodation for people experiencing homelessness.

“As well, collaboration will be strengthened across a range of program areas including: ACT Housing, Children’s Services, Family Services, Disability, Criminal Justice, Drug and Alcohol and Mental Health Services, Youth and Family Support and Indigenous Services.

“The Budget will enable homeless people to access public, non-government and private accommodation options.

“Depending on individual circumstances, provision will be made for families to access crisis accommodation for periods up to six months.

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“There is currently no supported crises accommodation for homeless families in the ACT and homeless couples without children are separately accommodated, which is an unacceptable situation.

“Importantly, the Budget funding will enable people moving from supported accommodation services to receive appropriate ongoing outreach support. This will assist them to sustain independent living arrangements and to break the cycle of homelessness.

Mr Wood said the 2003/04 Budget includes almost \$5 million over four years (\$1.2 million in the first year) to:

- pilot projects that encourage flexible and innovative service and support responses to homelessness;
- sector development, including increasing the capacity of the sector to support clients with complex needs; and
- purchase specialist services to address specific client needs.

“These initiatives complement the Stanhope Government’s development of an ACT Homelessness Strategy which will provide a whole-of-government response to reducing homelessness and supporting those in need,” Mr Wood said.

Statement ends