



ACT Government

2002-2003 BUDGET

MAJOR BOOST TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Labor's first Budget will deliver more than it promised in mental health, Chief Minister, Jon Stanhope, said today.

Mr Stanhope said Labor had promised to spend at least an additional \$1 million commitment to improve services and provide extra funding to mental health.

"But we will go further: there is so much unmet need, so much that the Liberals left neglected, that we need to find more," he said.

"The Government will inject an additional \$1.37 million in the coming year, and the money will increase in the out years.

"It is a tangible demonstration of our commitment to improving mental health services in the ACT," Mr Stanhope said.

He said four significant programs would benefit from the Government's commitment to mental health:

- The Older Persons' Mental Health Service
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Calvary and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, and
- Mental Health Education Program

Expansion of the Older Persons' Mental Health Service (\$322,000 in 2002-03)

This initiative provides for the expansion of the Older Persons' Mental Health Service through the employment of five additional mental health clinicians.

This expansion will support the recommendations made by Professor Edmond Chiu in his 2002 Review of the ACT Older Persons' Mental Health Service, and bring the service closer to the benchmark for similar services in Australia.

"The ACT population is ageing at the fastest rate in Australia, at a rate that is twice the national average," Mr Stanhope said.

"This rapid ageing places a number of demands across our health system and we need the resources to properly support older people.

"In particular we need the resources, staffing and facilities to support older people with a mental illness, allowing them to maintain quality of life and continuity of care.

"The Older Persons' Mental Health Service was established to assist older people with a mental illness, including dementia. The extra staff will allow the Service to

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continue to provide a high quality care and to meet the increase in demand,” Mr Stanhope said.

The program will provide a comprehensive community based aged psychiatry service including clinical management, neuropsychological assessments and short-term psychotherapy.

Expansion of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS - \$466,000 in 2002-03)

This initiative will:

- improve the capacity of CAMHS to meet demand for specialist services for children and adolescents with moderate to severe mental health problems;
- provide specialist child and adolescent expertise to the Mental Health Crisis Assessment and Treatment Service; and
- allow CAMHS to increase its early intervention and health promotion efforts.

“It is vital for the future welfare of our children and young people that we have the capacity to protect their mental and emotional wellbeing and the skills and resources to intervene when necessary,” Mr Stanhope said.

“This funding will help Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services meet the growing demand for specialist mental health clinical intervention.

“It will also allow the Service to increase its focus on early intervention and mental health promotion, thereby helping to reduce long-term or chronic mental illness and subsequent demand on adult mental health services.

“We will also improve services to young people in crisis by ensuring the Mental Health Crisis and Assessment and Treatment Service has specialist child and adolescent expertise.”

Calvary and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Adolescent Mental Health (CALCAM) Day Program (\$500,000 in 2002-03)

This initiative provides recurrent funding for a day treatment service for 12-18 year olds who require intensive mental health intervention. The Program, which has been successfully piloted over the last 18 months, provides a transition between hospital and home and services for children and adolescents who cannot be managed in regular school but who do not require intensive overnight care.

“At the last election, Labor pledged to support young people at risk and to adopt a collaborative approach to ensure the provision of support is seamless for at risk children and their families,” Mr Stanhope said.

“The recurrent funding to this Program will ensure an essential, high quality service is available to this most vulnerable group of young people.

“The Program will help young people continue their education when mental illness might otherwise keep them out of school or college.

“This will help reduce the long term impact of mental illness and help young people successfully reintegrate into the community.”

Mental Illness Education ACT Youth Mental Health Education and Literacy Program (\$85,000 in 2002-03)

This initiative provides recurrent funding for a consumer and carer provided mental health education program. The Program increases mental health knowledge through education to high school, college students and community groups about the experience of living with and recovering from mental illness.

“This is another program that has been successfully piloted in the ACT,” Mr Stanhope said.

“It was positively evaluated by the University of Canberra, and merits the ACT Government’s support.

“The program involves mental health consumers presenting challenging sessions to young people and encourages frank discussions of mental illness.

“If we can encourage young people to have a positive attitude towards seeking help we can take appropriate action before mental health problems become a crisis.

“This program helps develop healthy and positive attitudes and will also promote community acceptance and reduce the stigma of mental illness.

“These actions combined may help reduce the impact of mental illness on our young people.”

Statement ends 25 June 2002