



Michael Moore MLA

Australian Capital Territory

Minister for Health and Community Care

Independent

Member for Molonglo

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Health Portfolio 04

World class care in the Canberra Hospital

The ACT Health Minister, Michael Moore, today announced increased funding for The Canberra Hospital for the coming year.

"Despite the mixed press our major Hospital gets about budget difficulties, it has maintained an excellent standard of acute care services to the people of Canberra. Today's Budget provides funding to guarantee that this excellent standard continues," Mr Moore said.

The budget includes a base increase of \$5.497million in direct government funding,* with extra access to special funding pools for additional public elective surgery, growth in demand for health services, and organisational reform costs.

"That's an increase of 2.9% in government funding to the Hospital's base," said the Minister.

Improving service delivery

"The Hospital continues to provide a first-class quality of service and, over the last year, has contributed to the downward trend in the number of people waiting each month for elective surgery," Mr Moore said.

The coming year will see important initiatives in child and adolescent mental health services, genetic testing services, and much-needed refurbishments to the Hospital's Clinical School.

In the twelve months to April 2000, waiting lists for elective surgery have fallen by over 12%.

The Government will be taking further steps this year to bring down waiting times using bonus funding secured from the Commonwealth for waiting list initiatives.

Mr Moore also acknowledged that many people seeking Accident and Emergency attention with lower priority complaints were frustrated by delays in the A&E area.

"We are looking for new ways to help people in the emergency area, because we realise that the focus on serious injuries means inevitable delays for those with less threatening problems."

Innovations both within and outside the hospital campus were under consideration to address this problem.

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Intelligent budget management

Managing the hospital budget presents the Government with a dual task which at first sight seems contradictory, the Minister said.

"We must maintain the high-quality services we are accustomed to, and indeed set aside money for growing costs and growing demand.

"But we must also bring the Hospital's cost overruns under control.

"To achieve this task business and clinical managers at all levels of the Hospital must constantly review practices and procedures which are inefficient by national standards.

"A dollar wasted on inefficient practices is a dollar not spent on treatment. The Government wants those dollars saved and redirected to new and improved services for patients.

"The Government continues to direct that patient care be the number one priority."

To achieve this difficult balancing act, funding for TCH is increasingly being provided in the form of a base budget (which rises to keep pace with inflation) supported by extra funding sources provided outside the base budget.

"In addition to the growing funding base, the ACT Budget now includes three sources of possible funding assistance above and beyond the Hospital's own budget. These are the substantial new Growth Needs funds, the existing waiting list reduction funds, and support for redundancy costs which result from the reform process.

Off-budget funding sources available to TCH include:

- Growth needs funds – \$8.8million - for all portfolio service providers;
- Elective surgery funds – \$6.0million - for all potential surgery providers;
- Reform and redundancy funds – \$3.1million - exclusively for TCH.

Specific Initiatives launched this year include the following projects—

- The ACT Genetics Service, which will provide genetic testing, advice and counselling services*;
- Significant increases to Child and Adolescent Mental Health services*;
- Refurbishment of the Canberra Clinical School – the heart of Canberra's major teaching hospital. This refurbishment will cost \$3.1 million and is due to be completed by June 2002.

* further details on these initiatives is available in separate media releases issued today.

An estimated \$12 million of other capital works improvements are already underway at the Hospital, including refurbishments to the pathology and psychiatric buildings and building 7, modifications to the day surgery facilities, and infrastructure improvements in energy management and food services.

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