



## Budget 2006-2007

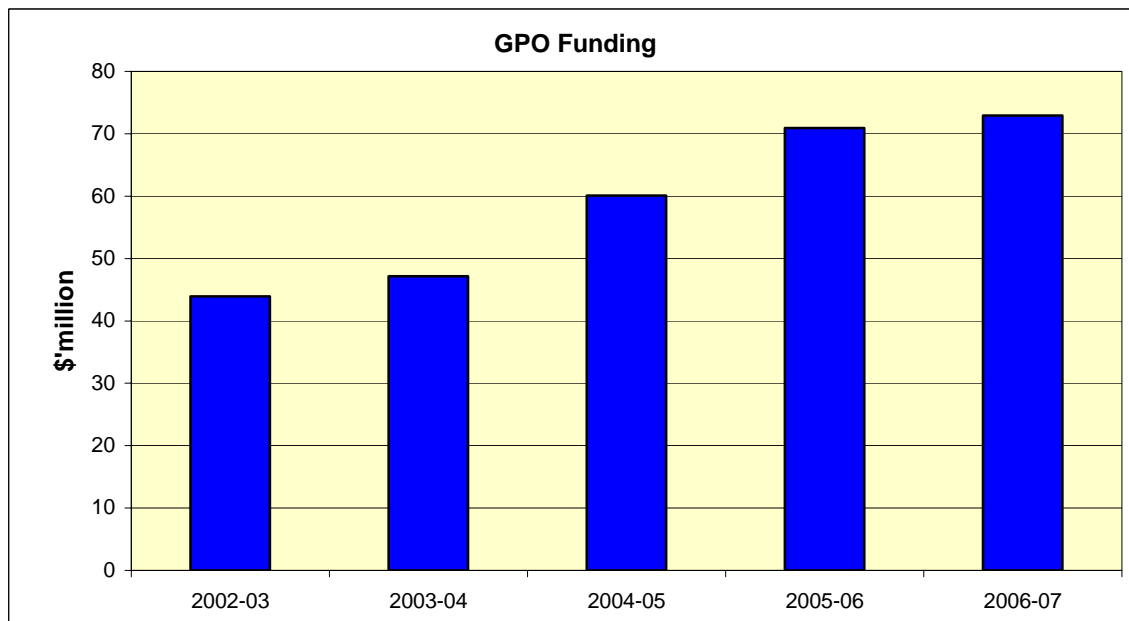
### FACT SHEET #F8: SERVICES TO CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

#### What's in the Budget on Children, Youth and Family Support?

Expenditure on services to children, youth and families in the ACT in 2006-07 totals \$74.1m (excluding depreciation), comprising:

- \$19.5m for care and protection services, including out-of-home care;
- \$8.9m for, Children, Youth and Family programs;
- \$30.2m in salaries and wages for the 396 staff; and
- \$15.5m in administration costs.

This compares with the previous year's budget of \$71.6m (excluding depreciation) and demonstrates the Government's determination to maintain levels of resourcing to this important area, within a tight budgetary situation.



Spending has increased significantly since 2002, under the Stanhope Government, clearly demonstrating our determination to ensure that our most vulnerable are protected.

This Budget also contains a new initiative which will focus on the development of integrated early intervention services to Indigenous families at risk, at a cost of \$556,000 over four years.

#### How does the ACT compare to other States and Territories?

Care and protection notifications in 2005-06 are set to reach 9,000 — compared to 8,115 in 2004-05 — demonstrating the significant ongoing demand for government



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resources and responses to meet this need. This increase is in line with national trends.

ACT costs for child protection and out of home care were 67% higher than the national average in 2004-05 (*Report on Government Services 2006*). The Department is working on ways of reducing the average cost of service per person, while meeting individual needs.

The funding base given by Government to this area has increased by 50% since the progressive implementation of the Vardon recommendations handed down in May 2004.

### **What changes are in store?**

Significant increases in funding for these services to the ACT community were provided over the previous two Budgets, so that major reforms required in care and protection services in the ACT could be undertaken.

The Government's focus now is on:

- consolidating reforms;
- working collaboratively with our partners across government and in the community to build better services;
- strengthening partnerships;
- getting on with planning and design of the New Youth Detention Centre at Mitchell to replace the centre at Quamby;
- improving facilities and services at Quamby in the interim;
- supporting new work practices within the Department, including improving professional practice, links between Care and Protection and Family Support Services; and
- taking a fresh look at the manner in which out of home care services are funded and delivered.

In 2005-06, services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT included launching the Indigenous foster care program, establishment of a Family Work Team, and establishment of the Narrabundah Hostel for young people at risk. These initiatives will be consolidated over the coming year, and extended, with development of the early intervention initiative.

In addition, significant reform to the *Children and Young People Act* will deliver more certainty for care and protection workers and for children and families. Changes include the introduction of cultural planning, broadening family conferencing and simplifying procedures for mandated reporters and for protection and release of information.

The Department will continue to implement government policy and will push ahead with the reform progress begun in 2004. Completing all reforms is part of the Government's continuous improvement process. This work represents the most substantive reform of welfare services in ACT history.