



ACT Government
2005-2006 BUDGET

MEDIA RELEASE

AFTER HOURS GP CLINICS RECEIVE ONGOING SUPPORT

Ongoing funding for the recently announced new model of after hours GP clinics that the ACT Government has been working on with the Canberra After Hours Locum Medical Service (CALMS) will be provided as part of the 2005-06 Budget.

The after hours GP clinics are to be located at The Canberra Hospital, Calvary Public and Erindale, with recurrent funding of \$1.455 million over four years.

"Previously CALMS provided after hours GP services only to patients whose GP is a member of CALMS, but the new model, developed in collaboration with CALMS extends access to all members of the ACT community," Mr Corbell said.

"Under the new model, general practices will no longer be required to pay a subscription fee to join CALMS, and subject to Australian Competition and Consumer Commission authorisation, CALMS will adopt a transparent not-to-exceed fee structure.

"This will provide patients with greater certainty about fees. Uncertainty has been one reason why some people haven't used CALMS services in the past.

"CALMS is currently the only after hours GP service of its type operating in the ACT, and this new service model recognises and builds on the valuable service that CALMS has been providing for 30 years."

Home visiting will be made available to people who cannot access the clinics or need assistance outside of clinic operating hours.

As part of the new service CALMS will also implement a telephone transfer system with Health First so that patients can be transferred between the two services.

"CALMS services benefits our whole health system because general practitioners can provide more appropriate primary medical care than public hospital emergency departments, freeing up emergency departments to focus on genuine emergencies."

Statement ends

