



ACT Government  
**2004-2005 BUDGET**

---

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**COOKING WITH GAS ON ENERGY CONCESSIONS**

More than 25,000 pensioners stand to benefit from the Stanhope Government's energy concession initiative in the 2004-05 Budget.

Disability, Housing and Community Services Minister Bill Wood said that \$740,000 in 2004-05 - \$3.6 million over four years - would go towards the concession, which increases the maximum annual electricity rebate and introduces a natural gas rebate for pensioners in the ACT.

"Natural gas use is increasing in the ACT as an energy source for heating, cooking and hot water, and this Budget initiative reflects this change in energy use," Mr Wood said.

"It also ensures that pensioners are not financially disadvantaged if they choose to use gas rather than electricity as an energy source.

"Both NSW and Victoria offer a combined electricity and gas Energy Concession and this will bring us into line with our neighbours. Such an approach ensures that all pensioners have equal access and entitlement to rebates for electricity and gas.

"The maximum annual rebate to pensioners for their use of electricity and gas will increase in 2004-05 to \$189.11 per year.

"This initiative creates a more equitable approach to ACT residents on low incomes and is in line with the Government's social obligations to support all community members.

"It supports continued accessibility for pensioners to accommodation that is warm, well-lit and safe, and ensures a level of economic independence and security.

"This initiative builds on funding in the Third Appropriation to ensure concession payments will meet price rises in electricity, water and sewerage. It also supports key areas of *The Canberra Plan* which address the causes of disadvantage and promote the value of older Canberrans to our community," Mr Wood said.

**Statement Ends.**