



ACT Government

2004-2005 BUDGET

MEDIA RELEASE

\$2.2M OF HEALTH SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

The ACT Government has funded \$2.205 million worth of initiatives to improve the health and well being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Territory, said Health Minister Simon Corbell.

“The Government’s Budget funding of \$2.205 million over four years helps to achieve *The Canberra Social Plan’s* commitment to introduce an integrated series of measures to address indigenous disadvantage,” said Mr Corbell. He said the initiatives would address key health problems and be culturally sensitive while linking with mainstream ACT health services.

Hearing program set up

“The Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service will provide a screening and treatment service, including surgery, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who have a chronic ear infection,” said the Minister. “These infections are important to treat because they can lead to hearing loss, deafness, and possibly learning difficulties.” \$200,000 is allocated for 2004-05 to implement as part of *The Canberra Plan* strategy to build a stronger community.

Midwifery program expanded

Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service will also have its Aboriginal Midwifery Access Program expanded, with \$191,000 for the first year – another *Canberra Plan* initiative. Mr Corbell said for the first time extra staff would provide post-natal care and support and accompany mothers at the birthing facility.

“These additional services will enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait pregnant women to reduce their high risk of pregnancy complications and low birth weights. For two years the program has been improving birth outcomes for women by allowing them to overcome barriers to access mainstream health services where they can get the care and support needed.”

Outreach workers funded

The ACT Budget will fund \$140,000 for the first year for two outreach workers at the Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation and Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service. The workers will assist people who have both a mental illness and substance abuse problems.

Study into bush healing farm

The Government will also conduct a feasibility study into establishing a bush healing farm. “This farm could target improved health outcomes for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders by developing the most culturally appropriate prevention, education, rehabilitation and outreach programs to address drug and alcohol abuse within these local communities,” said Mr Corbell.

Statement Ends.

